

Landscape Experience and Migration: Superdiversity and the Significance of Urban Public Open Space

Clare Rishbeth

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Department of Landscape

University of Sheffield

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Abstract

Landscape Experience and Migration: Superdiversity and the Significance of Urban Public Open Space

This thesis examines how first generation migrants experience urban outdoor places, detailing significant findings and methodological development relating to two research projects. The research is located in Sheffield, England. The first research project (Viewfinder) focuses on young refugees and asylum seekers exploring citywide greenspaces and parks. The second project (Walking Voices) addresses a neighbourhood scale of interest, working with first generation migrant residents to communicate their own stories and experiences of their local area. Creative and participatory research methods were developed for on-site work, using photography and independent audio recording. The research found that spending time outside is an important means by which first generation migrants feel a sense of agency and belonging in a neighbourhood context. Though the research supports use of urban greenspace as beneficial to individual and collective wellbeing, it underlines the critical importance of understanding cultural dimensions – motivations and barriers - to visiting parks and other types of greenspace. Evaluation of a local environment is often shaped by migrants' experiences of past places, and previous expectations of life in the UK. Place attachment is strengthened by participation and familiarity in a local located community, and often by recognising transcultural connections. The overlapping use of public space by people from different ethnic communities offers opportunities for gradual informal contact and gives a visual shared recognition to the diversity of a neighbourhood. However, the ability to make choices about when to engage with one's own ethnic group, and when to retreat from the expectations of this 'public gaze' was also valued. The thesis examines the implications of these findings for landscape architecture practice, and emphasises that the profession needs to become more culturally literate in responding to the superdiversity of urban contexts, and to difference in social and cultural values with regard to recreation, socialising, and natural places.

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PART 1. COMMENTARY

1. Introduction

The purpose of this commentary is to provide evidence of the **coherence** and **significance** of the submitted publications, and to highlight how the complete thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge. The commentary discusses the empirical findings from two funded research projects, with findings published 2006 – 2014.

1.1 Research aims

The overarching aim of this thesis is to examine how first generation migrants experience urban landscapes.

Unifying aims of the programme of research were:

1. To understand the benefits and barriers to using urban public open space by people who are first generation migrants.
2. To understand how place attachment may be shaped by personal histories of migration.
3. To explore how cultural values regarding landscape inform the everyday experiences of using outdoor spaces in superdiverse urban contexts.
4. To discuss implications for the practice of landscape architecture.

The first research project (Viewfinder) focused on young refugees and asylum seekers exploring citywide greenspaces and parks. The second project (Walking Voices) focused on one neighbourhood and worked with first generation migrant residents to communicate their own stories and experiences of their local area. Creative and participatory research methods were developed for on-site work, using photography and independent audio recording.

1.2 Academic and professional contexts

This research has very little precedent in the academic context of Landscape Architecture, certainly in the United Kingdom. The literature base is largely

established through work undertaken in the disciplines of human and social geography, urban anthropology, and sociology, all of which have strong traditions of reflecting migration and place, sustaining reflection and the interrelationship of social, cultural and political factors. However, these studies are seldom grounded in the everyday usage, temporal rhythms and lived detail of outdoor places, and often fail to critique the designed contexts of communal life. Historically, there has been little connection to the implications of this research for policy and practice, and no understanding of the remit of landscape architecture.

1.3 Key definitions

Urban Greenspace

Urban Greenspace is a term used to define publically accessible land in towns and cities which has a predominantly soft surface or vegetated character (Dunnett et al., 2002). Mostly these areas are formally designated and have a range of purposes: e.g. parks, urban squares, play and recreational areas, riverside walks and cemeteries.

Place Attachment

‘Place Attachment’ is a theoretical framework that aims to encapsulate the multi-dimensional emotional bonds between people and places (Altman and Low, 1992). Though driven strongly by research in the field of environmental psychology, it has important links to other place based disciplines such as landscape architecture, geography and urban design. A recent publication ‘Place Attachment; advances in theory, methods and applications’ (Manzo and Devine-Wright, 2014) reflects the vigour of this field and updates the seminal ‘Place Attachment’ text by Altman and Low (1992). The weakness of the work in this field, from the perspective of my own research objectives, is the lack of nuance in looking at personal identities and complexity of contexts. The common essentialising of ethnic identities, and the lack of ambiguity often seems to diminish the findings with relation to the demographic complexity of urban populations.

Wellbeing

The notion of ‘wellbeing’ is becoming increasingly popular as a framework for broad health and quality of life agendas. Conceived as positive health, there has

been a range of publications that address the contribution of greenspace to personal and community wellbeing (Muirhead, 2011; Newton, 2007; Cooper et al., 2014). Public health and environmental quality agendas are commonly identified as important drivers for social equity.

Superdiversity

Vertovec's term 'superdiversity' (2007) was coined to describe the increasingly complex multitude of variables that are relevant to describing populations in many urban contexts. Though there is a primary emphasis on diversity of ethnicity, it foregrounds the interaction between this and other factors such as religion, race, length and security of residence, educational background, family context and legal status. This term is becoming widely used but has been contested due to the emphasis on ethnic diversity as extra-ordinary (Back, 2015).

Intercultural

The term 'intercultural' is commonly used to describe a focus on diversity of culture and ethnic background. Though sometimes used in similar contexts as 'multicultural', using 'intercultural' indicates an ambition to embrace less bounded identities with an emphasis on mutual interaction and openness (Cantle, 2012).

Transnational places

This term is used to highlight places that have been adapted or changed as a result of patterns of migration, and specifically foregrounds connections between the locality and other countries and regions. Hou (2014) has spearheaded a network of transdisciplinary work on the social dynamics and materialities of migrant and intercultural spaces. Methodologically this draws on the work of scholars in professionally orientated disciplines. In particular, research in planning (for example Sandercock, 2003; Healey, 2007; Sarkissian, 2005) has demonstrated the importance of careful listening to personal stories with regard to broader contexts of power dynamics, and reflects on the implications of these for urban change.

Everyday sociability and encounter

This research area brings together disciplines largely from a geographical and sociological perspective addressing how individuals, communities and

neighbourhoods shape relationships; both incidental and more sustained, convivial and problematic. Whether this contact is ‘meaningful’ is contested. ‘Contact theory’ (Allport, 1954) suggests that using outdoor places in diverse neighbourhoods increases integration (Dines et al., 2006; Neal et al., 2015), however others would argue that this a naïve view and contact can simply reinforce prejudice (Amin, 2002; Valentine, 2008). Extended research projects, such as the Live Difference project (2011-14) and Everyday Multiculture (2012-14) have reflected political and social challenges of everyday sociability in diverse neighbourhood spaces.

Within the professional practice of landscape architecture very little has been discussed, let alone published, with regard to working in contexts of ethnic diversity. The Black Environmental Network is an important activist movement that aims to support an inclusive framework for engagement, but does not reach individual practitioners and has latterly been much reduced by funding cuts. The work of the Intercultural Cities movement (Wood and Landry, 2007) has been instrumental in raising the profile of practice led questions around what intercultural cities can and should be, but is mostly removed from the specifics of urban design.

1.4 Personal background and expertise

My own background is as a landscape architecture practitioner. My degree and post-graduate diploma were in landscape architecture, essentially design based courses with no formal research element. Before joining the Department of Landscape as an academic and studio teacher I worked on community design projects in West London and Slough, areas characterised by migration from the Indian sub-continent. I have also spent time living abroad, including working as a design tutor in the National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan in 1995.

1.5 Structure of commentary

The commentary has been divided into the following sections to set out the coherence and significance of this research clearly.

Chapter 1: Introduction.

Chapter 2: Overview and Coherence of Research Projects.

In this section I set out the initial ambition of the projects, adaptations made from the initial proposals, and how the second project (Walking Voices) developed the findings and methods of the first project (Viewfinder). I give details of the scope and research objectives of each project, its funders, collaborators and research assistants.

Chapter 3: Submitted publications.

In this section I detail the submitted publications, associated research project, co-authorship (where relevant), type and date of publication. Each publication is introduced with a full reference and abstract. I set out the roles and responsibilities of each author for co-authored publications.

Chapter 4: Contribution to development of research methodologies for understanding urban landscapes.

Two of the submitted publications focus on methodological issues, one for Viewfinder (Finney and Rishbeth, 2006) and one for Walking Voices (Rishbeth, 2014). This section supplements the detail given in the publications by articulating the overall areas of methodological innovation and development over the course of the two projects. It focuses on two key areas of significance: experiential on-site methods and absencing the researcher.

Chapter 5: Ethics and positionality in migration research.

This section discusses issues that could only be briefly discussed in the submitted publications, but were key to the thinking and engagement of these projects. I identify and debate the resolution of two specific ethical challenges raised within the course of the projects. I conclude with a reflection on my own positioning as a researcher, in particular drawing on notions of intersectionality.

Chapter 6: Contribution to developing theory.

Contribution to theory is largely evidenced within the submitted publications. In this section I aim to represent my academic voice as a scholar speaking into specific fields of inquiry. In addition to giving an overview of findings relating to research aims, I present four focused discussions where my research contributes a

specific viewpoint and knowledgeable position: refugee experiences of urban greenspace, wellbeing and being outdoors post-migration, memory and multiplicity of place attachments, and visibility in intercultural places.

Chapter 7: Implications for landscape architectural practice.

This section highlights key publications relating to impact, suggests approaches in which the findings of this research could influence landscape design in practice, and raises broader contexts of social justice and landscape architecture.

Chapter 8: Conclusion.

In this section I summarise and reflect on the findings and process of the research.

2. Overview and Coherence of Research Projects.

2.1 Background to Viewfinder

Prior to undertaking the Viewfinder project I had published two peer-reviewed papers. The first of these ‘Ethnic minority groups and public open space: how should designers respond?’ (Rishbeth, 2001) was a literature review of existing research, with some discussion of the implications of this research for landscape architecture professionals. The second, ‘Ethno-cultural representation in the urban landscape’, addressed how urban designers and landscape architects engage with overt signposting of ethnic community identities in place, and included findings from on-site questionnaires in community garden case study locations (Rishbeth, 2004).

Subsequently I decided to focus my research interest on how people from first generation migrant backgrounds experience public greenspaces. I was becoming more aware of ethical issues of research within ethnic communities: in particular the problems of over-researching and of essentialising ethnic identities. I aimed to develop a methodological approach that encompassed a range of parks and greenspaces and that encouraged a more nuanced reflective discussion, both of the experiential qualities of space and of individual migrant backgrounds.

2.2 Viewfinder Research Project

The Viewfinder project was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (£17,900). The grant title was “Urban greenspace re-visioned: black and Asian perspectives”. It ran from May 2004 – March 2005. I was the Principle Investigator, and recruited a Research Assistant, Dr. Nissa Finney, who worked 80% on the project.

The stated aims at the application stage were:

1. To understand the perceptions of people from black and Asian backgrounds to exploring a range of urban open spaces.
2. To examine the role of memory and childhood experience in the enjoyment of landscape, and in particular constructs of ‘nature’.

3. To develop a methodology that gives priority to visual articulation of meaning produced by the participants.
4. For participants and their communities to benefit directly from the research.

The objectives were:

- a) To identify common themes and priorities regarding different types of open space expressed by participants.
- b) To identify qualities of space that attract and engage people from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- c) To identify both significant barriers against and motivations for open space use, and to illustrate emerging differences with regard to age, gender and ethnic background.
- d) To provide guidance for open space policy, design and management in order to maximise both number of visits and quality of experience by people from black and Asian communities.
- e) To develop theories of place and landscape attachment in academic literature with particular focus on the experience of immigrant groups.
- f) To make a visual contribution to debates regarding the diversity of cultural understandings of urban greenspace.
- g) To combine visual and oral narratives to express personal and social values by means of individual and collective photo-elicitation interviews.
- h) To facilitate a community arts training course in order that participants have the opportunity to achieve formal accreditation for taking part in a research project.
- i) To disseminate directly the results of the visual and oral research to the participants and their cultural and geographic communities.
- j) To use the project to raise awareness of open space provision among residents in the case study location.

The grant was developed in association with Positive Negatives, a community based training organisation located on the Wicker (an area of Sheffield which has a high number of ethnic community residents). The two members of staff we worked with were Jamaican British. They had experience of delivering training

within community settings and could provide a course accredited with the Open College Network (OCN). A photography course for participants matched their skills, provided an appropriate method for prompting discussion about urban greenspaces, and gave a purpose for visiting a range of greenspaces.

Project Proposal (from grant application):

The research project will focus on a photography training programme (called 'Viewfinder') for 15 participants from black and Asian communities. This course will run for 12 weeks, during which participants will explore and record 4 different greenspaces in Sheffield, visiting each location twice. Researchers will work with the participants at all times, documenting both the process and the product. Photographs taken by participants will be used for a photo-elicitation method of interviews on both an individual and group basis. 'Viewfinder' will culminate in a touring exhibition, which will form part of the dissemination process for the research project. The nature of the project and refinement of research methodology has been in developed in close collaboration with Positive Negatives, a community based media training unit.

A full account of the organisation and progress of the project is given in Finney and Rishbeth (2006), including explanations for some of the adaptations to the original proposals. From an academic perspective the most important of these was the changing of the participant group from 'people from black and Asian backgrounds' to 'refugees and asylum seekers'. This was due to a problem with the funding stream proposed by Positive Negatives for supporting the training, which meant instead we needed to attract participants under the auspices of the Refugee Housing Association. This proved to be a significant test for our methodology, as compared to more settled migrant communities, these participants had arrived in the UK relatively recently, generally had chaotic and stressful living conditions, and many had limited abilities in spoken English. There were also some changes to the fieldwork practice, with more open spaces being visited (ten in total), and more varied methods being used for stimulating reflective discussion.

The key findings, as reported to the funders were:

- Preliminary findings of the Viewfinder Project clearly highlight the role that public open space, and participation in its leisure opportunities, can contribute to a higher quality of life for refugees and asylum seekers.
- This research supports the notion that for migrants a positive impression of the local environment, and the ability to link this conceptually with memories of past experiences, can be a useful component in building acceptance of a new life.
- Participant experiences of engagement and detachment can point to future policy and research priorities relating to health and leisure use of greenspace by refugee communities.
- Aspects of understanding cultures of recreation in open space need to be considered when encouraging refugees and asylum seekers to use urban greenspaces.

More detail is given in the End of Award report, and in the paper Rishbeth and Finney (2006).

2.3 From Viewfinder to Walking Voices

The Viewfinder project was successful in many ways, contributed to research on migration and place, and furthered my own thinking on methodological approaches for reflecting experiential qualities of place among first generation migrants. There were limitations that I was keen to address or do differently in a subsequent project, alongside aspects that proved crucial to its success in unanticipated ways, and were useful to develop further.

First, the focus on Viewfinder was on specific green spaces. The format of the sessions required that we took the research participants to the sites by mini-bus. The group of refugees and asylum seekers were in nearly all cases exploring these locations from the point of view of ‘non-users’. So their experience was one with a strong emphasis on novelty and of new exploration, and this experience was almost entirely prescribed by the researchers. Ultimately, we were exploring

places that, though not geographically distant, were mostly divorced from their everyday lives (indeed, this was an important finding of the research).

Second was the relationship between the visual data and the researcher. We found that the act of taking a photograph is strongly governed by cultural convention – for example wanting a photo taken of oneself in front of a beautiful view. This phenomenon is largely ignored in participant photography methods but has an important impact on research findings. Interviewing participants about their photographs gave us some insight into their responses to place, but our understanding was significantly limited by the participant’s level of spoken English, and mostly we had fairly superficial discussions (it’s nice, it’s beautiful). I do believe that working with visual methods has a place in social science research, but it is important not to underestimate the potential for researcher bias in interpreting the relevance of particular images.

The photography training was problematic as a means of producing visual material for analysis, but it had other benefits. For participants, the chance to take photographs was a genuine motivation for taking part, they enjoyed engaging with this mainstream activity, and took pride in their work. Gaining a qualification was significant for some, and the Positive Negatives staff supported the keener ones to gain their OCN award. They were excited to have their photographs displayed in the cinema foyer and appreciated the status of attending the end-of-project event in this location. In the context of working with ‘hard-to-reach’ participants, who live in demanding situations and are unlikely to prioritise taking part in academic research for its value to society, these were all important considerations. The perceived benefit of taking part was useful for recruitment, the intrinsic enjoyment helped sustain involvement, and ethically we felt taking part had been a positive dimension to their lives at the time.

2.4 Walking Voices

The Walking Voices project was also funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (£77,350). The grant title was “Walking Voices: first generation migrants’ experiential attachments to urban neighbourhoods”. It ran from July

2006 – November 2007. I was the Principle Investigator, and recruited a Research Associate, Dr. Mark Powell, who worked 80% on the project.

The stated aims at the application stage were:

- 1) To investigate perceptions and values of local neighbourhoods by first generation migrants.
- 2) To understand relationships between memories of participants' homelands and development or absence of place attachment to the adopted city.
- 3) To develop a broader understanding of patterns of outdoor use and engagement in the public realm by immigrant communities, and relate to existing policies and initiatives.
- 4) To explore experiential, sensory and temporal aspects of walking at the neighbourhood and city scale and the relationship of these to cultural identity.

The objectives were:

- a) To generate qualitative data which provides an overview of routes and use of public open space by individual participants over a period of time.
- b) To enable participants to make real-time recordings of walking and outdoor recreation in their neighbourhoods, in order to sample immediate reactions, sensory and emotional experiences.
- c) To provide a reflective framework for participants to discuss data generated, situate a wider context of the recordings, and contribute to emerging themes.
- d) To evaluate existing initiatives for encouraging open space use, neighbourhood integration and healthy lifestyle practices among ethnic communities with regard to research findings.
- e) For participants to receive direct benefit from engagement in the research by means of professional training in audio recording and media skills, with opportunities to be involved in editing broadcast quality radio and webpage design.
- f) For the research to achieve multiple levels of dissemination directed at participants, the local community and professional users in addition to furthering international academic debate.

The project was developed in collaboration with BBC Radio Sheffield. They advised on recording equipment that would allow broadcast quality outputs, and agreed to provide training in making on-site audio commentaries to the participants. Though it was not possible for them to give guarantees about broadcasting the participants' recordings, there was general support for including the project in their programmes.

Project Proposal (from grant application):

This project aims to investigate perceptions and values of neighbourhoods as described by first generation migrants. Focusing on the spatial, temporal and sensory context of the local environment, the research will address how experience of place contributes to settlement processes and cultural identity. How might memories of homelands contribute to a sense - or absence - of place attachment in the adopted city? Deepening understandings of both motivations and barriers towards engagement in the public realm will help inform initiatives regarding cohesive communities and healthy lifestyles.

The research uses qualitative and reflective methodology working intensively with a small group. Ten participants from a range of home countries and currently living in north Sheffield, will be loaned mini-disk recorders and asked to make real-time commentaries of walks or journeys in their daily lives. Supported by training from BBC Radio Sheffield, each will make twelve recordings over a three month period. Individual interviews and participant-guided tours will help contextualise the immediate accounts, and will inform an ethnographic and social mapping of the neighbourhood. The research scope includes interviews with environmental and community organisations to relate findings to policy and practice. Outputs include academic papers, a radio programme and interactive website.

The project did mostly progress as planned. The fieldwork was anticipated to be intensive, however we found it required high levels of researcher time at all stages - recruitment, sustaining involvement, shared analysis - so the methodology needed to be adaptable to ensure that our key priorities were fulfilled. There were slightly fewer participants than proposed, eleven altogether. The ambition of making a recording a week was not achievable, and overall fewer recordings were made (50 in total). However, the commentaries were longer than expected, with an average time of 30 mins, which provided us with a generous quantity of data. The

commentaries exceeded our expectations regarding quality, mostly demonstrating a good level of reflection and inquiry. More detail of the methodology development and experience of the project can be found in Rishbeth (2014).

Findings (as reported to the awarding body):

- This research identifies the unfamiliarity of the local environment as a component of culture shock for migrants. However, through spending time outdoors migrants learnt new skills for everyday living.
- Finding aspects of commonality with their previous lives are generally restorative and contribute to a creative engagement with the new place.
- The social expectations and obligations that equate being outdoors as 'being in public' are found to be of particular significance within first generation migrant communities.
- This research indicates that movement within the city or region can be used to explore different associations and aspirations, reflecting the hybrid cultural identities of first generation migrants.
- The findings of the project caution against simplistic understandings of belonging and integration in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods, and underline the significance of the individual's sense of place and located identity.

For more detail on these findings refer to papers Powell and Rishbeth (2012), Rishbeth and Powell (2013).

3: Submitted publications

The chapter provides abstracts of all publications submitted for this thesis, with justification for including in the thesis. Publications (final author copy before publication) are submitted as appendixes to this commentary. Publications 1-2 are products of the Viewfinder project, publications 3-6 relate to the Walking Voices project. At the end of the chapter an account is given of the author contribution to all the co-authored papers in this thesis.

| | Year of publication | Type | Authored | Research project |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1 | 2006 | peer-reviewed paper | with Dr Finney | Viewfinder |
| 2 | 2006 | peer-reviewed paper | with Dr Finney | Viewfinder |
| 3 | 2012 | peer-reviewed paper | with Dr Powell | Walking Voices |
| 4 | 2013 | peer-reviewed paper | with Dr Powell | Walking Voices |
| 5 | 2013 | book chapter | sole author | Walking Voices |
| 6 | 2014 | book chapter | sole author | Walking Voices |

3.1 Information relating to submitted papers

Publication 1 (peer-reviewed paper).

Rishbeth, C. and Finney, N. (2006) Novelty and Nostalgia in urban greenspace – refugee perspectives. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 7(1), pp.27-46.

Abstract:

This paper investigates migrants' perceptions and experiences of urban green spaces. The research used innovative participatory and visual (photography) methods and the twelve week programme included visits to ten green spaces in Sheffield. The participants were all asylum seekers and refugees from Asia and Africa. This paper discusses how and why the participants engaged or disengaged with local greenspace in the short and medium term. In particular, the importance of memory and nostalgia in participants' experiences; the significance of plants; the novelty of visiting British 'parks'; and the role of greenspace in enhancing the quality of life of immigrants are explored. The paper concludes that a positive impression of the local environment and meaningful participation in it can

be a useful component of integration into a new society. Furthermore, recognition of landscape elements or characteristics can provide a conceptual link between former and new homes. However, for this refugee group many physical and psychological barriers must be overcome if the full benefits of urban public open space are to be realised.

This paper is included in the thesis as it is the key publication relating to the findings of the Viewfinder Project.

Publication 2 (peer-reviewed paper).

Finney, N. and Rishbeth, C. (2006) Engaging with Marginalized Groups in Public Open Space Research: The Potential of Collaboration and Combined Methods. *Planning Theory and Practice*, 97(3), pp.281-295.

Abstract:

This paper discusses methodological dilemmas that were encountered, and strategies used to overcome them, in the Viewfinder project that was undertaken in 2004 in Sheffield, UK. The project investigated refugees' perceptions and experiences of urban Public Open Space in Britain. Through partnership with a 12 week, accredited photography training course and visits to public open spaces, the research combined visual, experiential, participatory and longitudinal approaches. This paper discusses the success of these in relation to three aims: 1. Generating a research situation of open communication; 2. Collaborating with non-academic partners; 3. Creating mutual benefit. The research identifies methodological techniques that have potential for engaging marginalised groups in landscape and planning research and in consultation practice.

This paper is included in the thesis as its focus allows a more detailed and reflective account of methodological development in this research project.

Publication 3 (peer-reviewed paper).

Powell, M. and Rishbeth, C. (2012) Walking Voices: flexibility in place and meanings of place by first generation migrants. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 103(1), pp.69-84.

Abstract:

The Walking Voices research project investigated the experience and perception of local places of first generation migrants. Two themes are addressed: the scope of the outdoor environment to support a sense of belonging to new places, and how choices and values enacted in the public realm might reflect changing transnational identities. The fieldwork focused on one neighbourhood in Sheffield, UK, and engaged participants from five countries of origin in self-recorded audio techniques. Analysis of narratives revealed a process of engagement with everyday places, and that emotional qualities of place attachment can be strengthened by the recognition of transnational links. The visibility of activities and interactions in outdoor places was useful both for the learning of everyday skills, and for modelling diverse cultures within the neighbourhood. We suggest that the representational qualities of place both reflect and shape transnational identities, and perceptions of these inform choices of engagement or disassociation.

This paper is included as it is one of the two papers reporting empirical findings from the Walking Voices project.

Publication 4 (peer-reviewed paper).

Rishbeth, C. and Powell, M. (2013) Place Attachment and Memory: Landscapes of Belonging as Experienced Post-migration. *Landscape Research*, 38(2), pp.160-178.

Abstract:

This paper examines the role of public spaces in developing emotions of place attachment by first generation migrants. We look at the role of memory, of both continuity and dislocation prompted by everyday experiences of local places among residents who had moved to the UK from a range of non-European countries. The research was focused on a neighbourhood in Sheffield, with participants producing on-site independently recorded audio to communicate their responses to being outdoors. Our findings indicate the scope of outdoor places to prompt memories and highlight connections between different periods of the participants' lives. Performance of familiar activities and reflections of values in public spaces were important in developing a sense of belonging at the local scale. A sense of 'personal fit' to places of residence can reflect transnational identities and sense of continuity over different life stages.

This paper was included as it is the second of the empirical papers from the Walking Voices research, addressing specifically migration and place attachment.

Publication 5 (book chapter in edited volume).

Rishbeth, C. (2013) Everyday Places that Connect Disparate Homelands: Remembering through the City. In: J. Hou (Ed.) *Transcultural Cities: Border-Crossing and Placemaking*. London, Routledge. pp.118-132.

Scope of book:

“Transcultural Cities uses a framework of transcultural placemaking, cross-disciplinary inquiry and transnational focus to examine a collection of case studies around the world, presented by a multi-disciplinary group of scholars and activists in architecture, urban planning, urban studies, art, environmental psychology, geography, political science and social work. The book addresses the intercultural exchanges as well as the cultural transformation that takes place in urban spaces. In doing so, it views cultures not in isolation from each other in today’s diverse urban environments, but as mutually influenced, constituted and transformed”.
(Hou, 2013, cover text).

Scope of chapter:

In this chapter I examine ways in which migrant residents of Burngreave engage with and enact their own identities and values within shared public space. The methodology of the project is introduced with regard to three key principles: focusing on one neighbourhood, representing diverse experiences, and recording of on-site commentaries. The findings are discussed: demonstrating comparisons and connections to the country of origin, how individual and community identities are performed in public, and how life choices are reflected in place attachment and sense of belonging. The chapter outlines four points of guidance for practitioners in urban design and planning, ‘placemaking in the space of flow’.

This chapter synthesises some of the findings and arguments introduced by the two peer reviewed papers (publications 3 and 4). It is included in this thesis as the publication most embedded in the practice of Landscape Architecture, and is the only publication that specifically includes implications of the research findings for designers and planners working in transcultural neighbourhoods.

Publication 6 (book chapter in edited volume).

Rishbeth, C. (2014) Articulating Transnational Attachments through On-site Narratives. In: L. Manzo and P. Devine-Wright (Eds.) *Place Attachment: Advances in Theory, Methods and Applications*. London, Routledge. pp.100-111.

Scope of book:

“Place attachments are emotional bonds that form between people and their physical surroundings. These connections are a powerful aspect of human life that inform our sense of identity, create meaning in our lives, facilitate community and influence action. Place attachments have bearing on such diverse issues as rootedness and belonging, placemaking and displacement, mobility and migration, intergroup conflict, civic engagement, social housing and urban redevelopment, natural resource management and global climate change. In this multi-disciplinary book Manzo and Devine-Wright draw together the latest thinking by leading scholars from around the globe, capturing important advances in three areas: theory, methods and application. In a wide range of conceptual and applied ways, the authors critically review and challenge contemporary knowledge, identify significant advances and point to areas for future research”.

(Manzo and Devine-Wright, 2014, cover text).

Scope of chapter:

This chapter is situated in the methods section of the book, with a primary remit of discussing how novel qualitative methods can be developed that are specifically appropriate to researching place attachment. Two approaches are examined in more detail: located storytelling to explore experiential qualities of attachment, and participatory methods to support unexpected findings and diverse voices. I discuss how these approaches were worked into practical methods for the Walking Voices project; the strengths of this and problems encountered. The second half of the chapter presents the findings of the research with regard to place attachment and migration; the role of memory, and the significance of transnational place attachments in informing a sense of belonging at a neighbourhood scale.

This chapter is included in the thesis as it gives the most informed theoretical context for the methodological development of the Walking Voices project, and allows for a more critical discussion of the practice on the ground. Though some

of the findings with regard to Place Attachment have already been presented in publication 4, the situating of this chapter in an edited volume specifically on this concept allowed for a more nuanced discussion, and included some more recent literature.

3.2 Roles and responsibilities in co-authored paper

Both journal papers for the Viewfinder Project were co-authored by myself and Dr Finney.

Publication 1. I was the lead author on this paper, writing all the text, though with discussion of paper outline and content, and comments on various drafts contributed by Dr Finney. The final revisions were made after Dr Finney had finished her post doctoral position at the University of Sheffield.

Publication 2. Dr Finney was the lead author, with myself contributing to the discussion of the paper outline and content, and provided comments on original text which was submitted to Sociology Online. However, the paper was rejected from this journal, and we made the decision to significantly rework the text and submit to 'Planning Practice and Theory'. By this time, Dr Finney was no longer working at the University of Sheffield, and so I took on the lead position with regard to the rewriting, with email contributions and comments from Dr Finney.

Two journal papers from the Walking Voices project were co-authored by myself and Dr. Powell.

Publication 3. Dr Powell originally took the role of lead author. Working on the original text was approximately 50/50 between myself and Dr Powell in terms of content and writing. By the time the paper required substantive revision prior to resubmission Dr Powell was no longer employed on this research and so I took over as lead writer. The paper was rejected after this resubmission. Rewriting the paper for a different journal, and dealing with the minor amendments for resubmission, was my job given that Dr Powell was fully engaged in a new post. Though he was kept informed of the various redrafts, and offered feedback on each, the final text is around 80% Rishbeth / 20% Powell.

Publication 4. This paper was co-authored between myself and Dr Powell. I took the lead on this paper and wrote all of the text, with discussion of the original outline and comments on the text from Dr Powell.

Book chapters from the Walking Voices project (publications 5 and 6) were both sole authorship.

4: Contribution to development of research methodologies for understanding urban landscapes.

Methodological innovation has been a hallmark of these research projects, and I believe was integral to their success in attracting funding in the first instance. Both ‘Viewfinder’ and ‘Walking Voices’ have attracted academic interest with regard to their methodologies, leading to invited participation in conference panels and edited book volumes.

The research has made contributions to development of landscape methods specifically in the following areas:

- Experiential on-site methods as a means of researching landscape experience.
- Visual methods allied with undertaking photographic training, and the use of these with participants with limited skills in spoken English.
- Audio and walking methods, and how these gave a voice to participants commonly perceived as ‘hard-to-reach’.
- Narrative dynamics enabled by ‘absenting the researcher’.
- Working with external partners to give integrity to creative work.

One of the strengths of the methodologies of these projects is that they have not only supported nuanced narratives from participants but have also captured the imagination as projects that are engaging in themselves, note-worthy both within academic and non-academic contexts. Rather than trying to summarise too broadly the in-depth discussion given in the submitted papers (in particular Rishbeth and Finney (2006) and Rishbeth (2014)), here I aim to simply draw out two key approaches that were developed through both research projects and have particular impact for developing landscape specific methods.¹

4.1 Experiential on-site methods

¹ It is important to be clear that, though I worked by principles of participants taking increased control and gaining genuine benefit from the research projects, I do not claim to be conducting Participatory Action Research or Co-produced research.

At the time of developing the Viewfinder project on-site methods were relatively uncommon in academic research, and in my proposal I found myself drawing heavily on community consultation methods used in landscape planning and design.

Discussing comparisons between different sites in research is usually conducted remotely through photographs. In the Viewfinder research I devised a framework and a method for visiting ten different urban greenspaces with a group of participants. This more radical approach allowed immersion in the experiential qualities of each site, and supported on-going reflection by the participants in comparing the qualities of different spaces.

Exploring the sites with the participants was the most informative and evocative dimension to the Viewfinder research, allowing us to note choice of activities, observe reactions and to discuss how the experience of each place unfolded. The photographs taken only presented a slice of the visits, and researcher field-notes became the primary source of research data. On-site research allows for the embodied qualities of place experience to emerge: the physical effort, the litter, the confusion of orientation, long views and detailed textures, social codes of behaviour, weather and personal comfort, emotions of exhilaration, sadness and companionship. Though subsequent discussion of the photos did not achieve significant additional insight, the act of photo-taking, and the visual qualities of the photos themselves, added to the richness of the research process.

Walking Voices was also outdoor situated research, but one that allowed for a more sequential and unbounded definition of urban spaces. This is rare in outdoor research or consultation, which tends to base itself in one specific location or address one typology of urban places. Though ‘walking interviews’ have become a more common qualitative method over the last decade (Kusenback, 2003; Evans and Jones, 2011), and usually allow the participant to decide the route taken, these are nearly always one-off interviews, interacting directly with a researcher. Giving power to participants in deciding where and when they made their recordings, and making a number of recordings over a period of months, was crucial in understanding their own spatial and temporal territories.

4.2 Absenting the researcher

The ambition of absenting the researcher from the creative process was developed from experiences in the Viewfinder project and tested fully in the Walking Voices project. The aim of this included using a research model where though the theme is loosely set by researchers, the questions and ideas under discussion are entirely put forward by participants though free association (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). In Walking Voices, it is the place visited rather than the researcher that provides the prompts. The method attempts to address some of the limitations of staged research, where participants are placed in a given situation (as in Viewfinder). An ambition of the research was to reflect the actual areas of urban landscapes normally used by participants, rather than those seldom visited. It is notable that parks seldom feature in Walking Voices. It also aims to subvert the ‘observer effect’, the dynamic that being watched in itself changes normal behaviour. It does this to a limited degree, as walking while talking into a microphone is not a ‘normal activity’, and knowledge that the commentary will be listened to shapes how thoughts may be voiced. However, as participants became more used to the method, many of the commentaries did become nearer to ‘stream of consciousness’ texts, and validated the approach to some extent.

5: Ethics and positionality in migration and landscape research.

Both research projects raised challenging ethical issues. For each a ‘university ethics approval’ was gained in advance, and this process helped in thinking through appropriate guidelines and approaches. However, this was certainly ‘messy’ research, one that required numerous adaptations. The level of interaction with participants was high; in both projects the researcher-participant relationship was crucial to establishing trust and creating conditions for honest dialogue. The dynamics of all these individual relationships required working through how ethical values and principles apply and are negotiated in numerous complex situations.

The publications submitted have addressed ethical issues in their methodological sections. The fullest discussion is given in Finney and Rishbeth (2006) which explicitly focused on the Viewfinder methodology and the ethical implications and challenges of 1. Generating a research situation of open communication; 2. Collaborating with non-academic partners; 3. Creating mutual benefit. The scope of this commentary does not allow for a detailed discussion of all the ethical dimensions to the research. Instead I summarise and highlight two of the key issues raised by the methodological approaches across both projects, and then focus on one significant area of importance, that of my own identity and positionality as a researcher.

5.1 Two key ethical contexts and challenges

Reviewing the body of work, I recognise two key ethical challenges that were common to both projects and specific to the types of methodological approaches developed. Though these were recognised and addressed in some way at the time, they were not tidily resolved. Any further use or adaption of these methodologies would require addressing these issues.

Research participant as too demanding.

The ambition in both projects was to provide a context in which time was taken to make creative outputs, and participants were supported in learning and developing skills in a given media. For participants, the demands of time, creative input and

maintaining of relationships were significant compared to more traditional one-off engagements with research. The projects were designed to seep into their everyday lives and reflect something of their daily patterns of activity and social networks.

Did the projects demand too much? Was I mindful enough of multiple other requirements on time, energy and thinking for people living in complex situations? Though I was explicit and careful about the principle of shared benefit, of wanting the projects to be intrinsically interesting and enjoyable for participants, did the achieving of research goals overtake a respect for what it is reasonable for people to offer?

I strongly believe that more honest, more nuanced research (in itself an ethical ambition) is supported by repeated contact with participants. Recruiting was difficult, and the commitment requested by the research projects no doubt restricted participation to a significant extent. This was a 'cost'. The Walking Voices project was designed to rely on participants initiating recording within their daily contexts. This was found to be too significant a hurdle for about half the participants, and consequently we needed to adapt our methods and provide higher levels of support. Considering the often chaotic lives of the refugee participants in Viewfinder, though participation was erratic, retention rate was high, and involvement in activities and interviews after the end of the project suggested that for most participants it had indeed been a positive experience. Counter-intuitively, the more formalised group experience of Viewfinder proved to be more realistic than the highly participant-led approach of Walking Voices.

A methodological approach that is less intrusive in terms of demands on time would potentially be better integrated with a social situation or activity where the time and energies of participants are already committed. A co-participatory approach might mean working alongside an existing group of people, collectively developing research aims and methods. My instincts would be to move towards this kind of working in future. However, it would be unlikely to garner involvement from as wide a range of backgrounds as in the Walking Voices project.

Confidentiality and creative content.

Anonymity is one of the usual tenets of research ethics. However, methodologies that explicitly aim to recognise the intrinsic qualities of arts outputs, and the skill developed to create them, needs to also enable recognition of the artist themselves. In both projects, the authors of the research material were positioned as creative practitioners - photographers and as audio storytellers - and the interest in performing these identities was, for many, a key driver for participating in the research. This generated a tension between a person as a creator (named) and as a sharer of sensitive information (anonymous). It also generates boundary and ownership issues between the work created by the participant, and that created by the researcher.

This tension could only be negotiated at the individual level, discussing with each participant the variety of ways in which their work could be represented. The longevity of crediting work in different contexts was crucial, for example short local exhibitions compared to online accessible text. In general, Viewfinder work was not anonymised, and Walking Voices was anonymised, but some individuals made alternate choices, and some chose to be named but not photographed on the website. Walking Voices tended to raise more problematic narratives situated within a known located community, and writing about the research required a precautionary approach as to how people were represented in ways that could not be identified, especially when they were involved in specific community roles.

Was this approach satisfactory, responsible and ethical? I believe that reasonable decisions were made appropriate to projects of this scale (where individuals could easily be contacted with regard to matters arising) and at the time the research took place. Future research would potentially require more thorough approaches, in part to recognise the advances in technology and scope of social media over the last decade.

5.2 Research positioning and intersectionality

My own background and identity is relevant to the research, though largely absent from publications due to limits of word length and focus. In this section (albeit still

limited by word length and focus) I reflect on some of the ways my position and identity has impacted on my research projects.

I am a white British woman, at the time of these projects in my mid-thirties. I have a full-time academic position in a Russell Group University, though I arrived at this via a professional route (landscape architecture) rather than an academic one, and my teaching remit has more roots in practice than in my research activity. I am a south to north migrant within my own country. I have some experience of overseas living in a cross-cultural context: in my twenties I spend a year teaching and volunteering in Pakistan and India, as well as sporadic global travel. I have never had to move for reasons other than my own choice, and have had many advantages of access to education, adequate resources and means of participating in various communities. In terms of ‘checking my privilege’ it is important to be clear that I am, and am visible as: white, educated, heterosexual, middle-class, able-bodied and wealthy.

It is notable that in the academic field (and professional practice) of landscape architecture the vast majority of writers and practitioners are white. Researchers working on migration issues have a different profile, and there is a much higher presence of people from migrant backgrounds, both first and second generations. The latter area is much more engaged and explicit on issues of researcher identity, and there is a thread of discussion within the literature on the relevance of positionality, in particular insider positioning where a researcher shares the ethnic identity of a participant group (Voloder and Kirptchenko, 2014). Having a white non-migrant identity and undertaking research or writing on themes of migration, ethnicity or race is a clear step into representing experiences different from one’s own, and can be criticised simply for that. A reviewer for a book in which I contributed a chapter titled ‘Gardens of Ethnicity’ (Rishbeth, 2005) criticised the editor for not choosing a writer from a non-white ethnic background. Given the significant absence and marginalisation of academics and writers of colour I do not consider this a spurious comment, and support the challenge to promote diverse voices and expertise. But it still felt like a discriminatory critique. In my area of research, my whiteness is brought to the table.

Below I outline working approaches that acknowledge intersectionality and recognise the limits of insider/outsider binaries. I find these both conceptually and methodologically helpful in negotiating research practice as a white academic working in contexts of urban superdiversity and experiences of migration.

Many of the methodological challenges of qualitative research centre on the researcher's role in understanding and honestly representing the people and contexts of the research (Macpherson, 2011). There are specific issues raised when researching on, for, or with, communities that are commonly marginalised in civic power relationships, for example relating to race, age, (dis)ability, class, educational background. If the researcher shares that identity it can provide a relational bridge, allowing for conversational shortcuts and starting from a point of affiliation (Tolia-Kelly, 2004). There is also an (often tacit) assumption that there is greater authenticity in the research 'voice' when it speaks from an insider position.

Taking seriously the dynamics of intersectionality is essential in looking at identity and power dynamics. One of the problems of privileging an 'insider' research role is the tendency to essentialise one axis of identity while downplaying others. Even if researchers have shared ethnic or racial backgrounds with their participants, they may have different educational backgrounds, family or class contexts, different gender or sexual orientation. The notion of a truly 'insider' academic researcher is in almost all cases a limited concept and fails to acknowledge the heterogeneity of all communities. Academics who research their 'own' ethnic community are often the first to highlight this in their reflections (Mohammad, 2001; Voloder, 2008), and find assumptions formed by participants about their viewpoints and values are no less problematic than they might be for researchers with less recognisable common ground. Sometimes, working as an 'outsider' gives space for the researcher to ask the obvious questions, and demands a more explicit laying aside of assumptions and prejudices, an important process within qualitative research.

My experience and practice of fieldwork has indeed been informed, not solely by identity but importantly by experiences. As a qualitative researcher, intuitively you choose to bring different experiences to engage reflectively with others

(collaborators and participants). In my case this includes having lived in Asia, of doing youthwork, of having a father with disabilities, of having a religious faith, of being an atypical academic from a design background, of being a woman. In particular gender has been important, and working with other women has given me some insight into the dynamics of 'insider' solidarity. In these intersections I contextualise and evaluate the research process, as do other researchers with different issues regarding identity and experience, and recognise the equal complexity of participants' lives. Being present as a whole person within the research process, while also taking on the role of attending wholly to the experience of others, is a necessary tension of relational research, one that simultaneously enriches and challenges.

Chapter 6. Contribution to developing theory.

The programme of research represented by this PHD informs a number of areas of academic knowledge. In this chapter I outline the key findings with relation to the first three overarching research aims, outlining how they further academic debates. After each of these overarching summaries I then give a focused discussion on one or two areas of theory that emerged as significant.

1. To understand the benefits and barriers to using urban public open space by people who are first generation migrants. (6.1)
 - a) Refugee and asylum seeker experiences of urban greenspace. (6.1.1)*
 - b) Wellbeing after migration as supported by spending time outside. (6.1.2)*
2. To understand how place attachment may be shaped by personal histories of migration. (6.2)
 - a) Memory, place and multiple attachments. (6.2.1)*
3. To explore how cultural values regarding landscape inform the everyday experiences of using outdoor spaces in superdiverse urban contexts. (6.3)
 - a) Being visible: urban landscapes of integration. (6.3.1)*

The fourth overarching research aim, ‘to discuss implications for the practice of landscape architecture’ is presented in chapter 7.

6.1 To understand the benefits and barriers to using urban public open space by people who are first generation migrants.

Parks are conceived as collective social good: places of democratised leisure, open for everyone and free at the point of entry. Despite irregularities in quality and distribution, Britain is not lacking in urban park space, and every city highlights its fine provision of parks and greenspace. But when the focus shifts to the social diversity of visitors and types of participation in parks, the picture becomes more contested and nuanced in terms of equality, with people from black and ethnic communities being less frequent users of greenspace (Kloek et al., 2013; Maeer et al., 2012; Konijendiik et al, 2013). CABE Space research (2010) showed that access is one problem: in areas where more than 40% residents are black or

minority ethnic there is 11 times less greenspace than in neighbourhoods where residents are largely white, and the greenspace is also likely to be of lower quality.

The findings of this programme of research add much needed diversity and detail to studies of urban greenspace (Byrne and Wolch, 2009; Dunnett et al., 2002), giving some clarity to the motivations and barriers to use of parks in the UK by people from migrant groups. The specific focus on first generation migrants also challenges the work of researchers on life post migration (Anderson and Keith, 2014; International Organization for Migration, 2013; Jayaweera, 2011) to consider how time spent in the urban outdoors can support personal wellbeing and a sense of local belonging, and extends previous work on the environmental dimensions of wellbeing (Maller et al., 2006; Cooper et al., 2014).

The findings suggest that spending time outside is an important means by which first generation migrants can feel a sense of agency and belonging in a neighbourhood context. However, use of more formal public spaces (such as parks) is limited; recent migrants priorities are meeting basic needs and they often do not have the motivation or confidence to explore new places. Social contexts are important in how migrants feel they can use public spaces, and the lack of this can compound isolation and withdrawal from the public realm. Use of public space is gendered and informed by age and family responsibilities; these can have specific implications when intersected with ethnic identities. The findings from the Viewfinder project in particular allow for a specific focus on the use and motivations of using urban greenspace by refugees and asylum seekers.

6.1.1 Refugee and asylum seeker experiences of urban greenspace.

The findings on use of greenspace focused primarily on experiences of refugees and asylum seekers visiting parks in and around Sheffield, the majority of whom were recent migrants. For most participants, visiting parks in the UK was outside their normal experience. They were generally unaware of their existence, even those close to where they lived, so distance was not necessarily a factor. The discussions within the fieldwork underlined that visiting parks is an activity grounded in cultural norms, and therefore a lack of understanding of the common culture of using parks limited participant's ability to envisage realistic benefits of

visiting. The lack of a social context for visiting was integral to this difficulty (Rishbeth and Finney, 2006); commonly mentioned childhood experiences were visiting open spaces and natural areas in large groups of family and friends.

Unfamiliarity raised anxiety. The need to avoid ‘getting into trouble’ was a significant factor in daily decision-making, and limited a willingness to explore new places. Fear of racially motivated crime is another rational reason to avoid less known or quieter places (Black Environment Network, 2005). The ambiguous qualities of some landscapes – more vegetated urban parks, peri-rural locations or unusual places such as cemeteries or urban farms – compounded this broad uncertainty. Thirdly, socio-economic factors certainly also shape significant barriers to park use including language, transport, money and time.

Despite this, it is important to recognise joy. In stressful contexts of poverty and disruption, the younger adults taking part in the Viewfinder project enjoyed the novelty and playfulness of being in urban greenspace. They found meaningful points of nostalgia and reflections of their home countries in all kinds of unexpected landscapes, and these triggered on-going connections between different parts of their lives.

By focusing on the experience of recently arrived migrants, are there insights we can gain about diversity in use of greenspace more broadly? As more urban areas are characterised by population superdiversity it is important that greenspace can reflect heterogeneity, rather than meet the needs of a notional ‘average user’. Differences in park use may in part be explained by marginality theory (such as socio-economic barriers, Byrne and Wolch, 2009), but we need to pay attention to the significance of the park as a cultural landscape, and the activity of park-going as a culturally informed activity. For researchers and practitioners to better understand diversity in park use we need to critically address ethno-cultural constructions of recreation, nature, being outdoors and socialising in public – not just codifying these in simplistic terms, but teasing through the heterogeneity and commonalities within different migrant communities and society as a whole. Parks should not be seen as somehow separate from processes of transnational

placemaking which may more readily be recognised in urban streetscapes, but need to be equally open to challenge, appropriation and reshaping.

6.1.2 Wellbeing after migration as supported by spending time outside.

Settling in a new country requires learning new skills in the reading of mundane places, adapting to unexpected differences in everyday life, and establishing new social networks. Within this demanding context, this research has clearly shown that the experiential qualities of being outdoors can provide serendipitous glimpses of familiarity, times of relaxation, and the chance to participate in a broader public sphere.

There is a well-established body of research on the contribution of public greenspace to individual and community wellbeing – feeling good and functioning well - and on the benefits of spending recreational time outdoors, specifically in ‘natural environments’ (Maller et al., 2006; van den Berg et al, 2010; Cooper et al., 2014). Five key benefits are offered by Collins and Kearns (2007) and Muirhead (2011): 1) enhanced degree of physical or psychological removal from the everyday, 2) space to engage in both solitary and social activities, 3) a means of shaping collective and social identity, 4) opportunities for physical exercise and 5) the therapeutic value of having contact with nature. My own research does not contradict this summary. But it does raise questions of the significance of cultural and intercultural dynamics in understanding how individuals and communities may have preferences for different landscape typologies and prioritise different aspects of wellbeing.

Three of the aforementioned benefits of greenspace for wellbeing are clearly underpinned by cultural constructs which may shape landscape preference: how nature is defined and valued (5), the relative importance of solitary or social contexts (and how places might be used in solitary or communal ways (2)) and preferred types of physical exercise (4). My research highlighted unexpected transnational connections in vegetated landscapes, both naturalistic and non-naturalistic, as well as barriers related to a lack of legibility in less clearly managed greenspaces. Using public spaces with family and friends was generally seen as highly important, though more relaxed private times were also noted. In

both research projects there was limited reporting of physical activity undertaken in public spaces, and the benefits to physical health of being outside was seldom articulated. Understanding this diversity of perspective could, and should, impact on the planning, design and management of public spaces.

The notion of public space providing a form of escapism from the everyday (1) was present in the research findings. For residents of a neighbourhood where being visible within their own migrant community was important, temporary retreat to a different area (though not necessarily greenspace) provided them with a break from tight social networks and afforded an element of privacy (Powell and Rishbeth, 2012). Public greenspace such as parks can offer respite from poor housing with scope for relaxation and play, and can evoke feelings of nostalgia and connections across different life stages. Spending time in a green or natural environment, being in a context which is clearly designed for recreational purposes, provided some measure of personal restoration to participants in both research projects.

However, ‘the outdoors’ is not necessarily a benign place, and can contribute to raised stress levels rather than stress alleviation. In particular, the challenge of negotiating unknown places, and unknown typologies of place, may feel like a risk for an individual’s own security. The public realm is a contested space, one that reflects gender, age and racial power dynamics. The findings indicated that people from migrant communities develop skills in judging temporal and spatial dynamics of particular places, and personal strategies for avoiding problematic situations or harassment (Clayton, 2009). For all but the most confident of individuals, this can lead to curtailing of participation in some aspects of the public sphere (Sreetheran & van den Bosch, 2014).

In general though, the benefits to wellbeing of ‘shaping collective and social identity’ through spending time outdoors were strongly supported by the research. Seeing and being seen, and gradually developing a sense of one’s place through being present in a locality, is critical in a context of new beginnings. While recognising other vital measurements of wellbeing for migrants – safety,

employment, and ability to communicate – the findings underline that positive experiences of the local environment are also an important factor.

6.2 To understand how place attachment may be shaped by personal histories of migration.

Scannell and Gifford (2010) argue that place attachment is best understood as a three-dimensional framework encompassing person, process and place. Their thorough review connects to my own research aims primarily with regard to the ‘person’ and ‘process’ dimensions. Scannell and Gifford argue that place attachment in the ‘person dimension’ may be a form of collective culture “through shared historical experiences, values and symbols” (p.2) and cite research which explores this relative to ethnicity (Virden and Walker, 1999) and religion (Mazumdar and Mazumdar, 2004). Within their discussion of ‘process’ dimensions, broadly encompassing psychological connections that individuals make with places, they state the importance of emotional bonds with place, especially with regard to loss or threatened loss (Fullilove, 1996), and how this is also laced with cognitive connections, stating that “memories, beliefs, meaning, and knowledge that individuals associate with their central settings make them personally important” (p.3). How these values and connections are embedded in personal actions is also described within the process dimension, highlighting that it is not only how one views a place, but also how one acts within it that shapes attachment. The specific contribution of my research has been to demonstrate how these actions (of returning, appropriating or re-creating after loss) combine with responses to place (in particular materiality and temporal qualities) to not only reflect but also strengthen attachment.

The findings of my research (conducted before the Scannell and Gifford framework was proposed and broadly adapted) were not explicitly focused on deepening understanding of collective historic ties, the ‘person’ dimension, and this did not emerge as a coherent theme. Indeed, the methodological approaches that included migrants from a wide range of ethno-cultural backgrounds deliberately set out to challenge grouping and analysis of findings by pre-determined notions of shared heritage. However, the case for place attachment as a psychological process, reflecting affect, cognition, emotional ties and embedding

actions and places with significance was strongly supported. Critically, through the located nature of the research projects, I was able to establish that processes shaped by transnational migration can lead to increased attachment to specific places (plot, neighbourhood and city scale), establishing a connection to the third dimension concerning 'place' (Scannell and Gifford, 2010, p.4).

Rishbeth (2013) and Rishbeth and Powell (2013) set out deeper understandings of place attachment as a reflection of transnational identities, largely supporting and refining previous research (Ehrkamp, 2005; Lager et al, 2012). As summarised in the focused discussion below, the findings clearly demonstrate how transnational ties can inform rather than diminish a local sense of belonging, and that "bondedness", strength of attachment, may not always equate to "rootedness", which implies length of residence (Scannell and Gifford, 2010, p.4; Hay, 1998, Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974; Riger and Lavrakas, 1981). Memories of home countries can be prompted in unexpected ways and usually stimulate delight and a sense of continuity (Rishbeth and Finney, 2006). Social and recreational use of outdoor spaces that reflect cultural identities and communities, in particular patterns of gathering, are much valued. Place attachment is strengthened by participation and familiarity in a local located community, and often by recognising transcultural connections. This shapes a persuasive argument for the functional role of place attachment (Scannell and Gifford, 2010, p.5): for new migrants strengthening place attachment can increase feelings of security, an appreciation of the benefits and positive affordances of local places, and a sense of continuity within the context of major life changes.

Analysing the research narratives within place attachment theoretical frameworks has been a productive and insightful means of interrogating aspects of migration and place. However, these theories tend to be discussed in isolation from more sociological understandings and debates, which give far greater emphasis to socio-political contexts, inequality and the everyday materiality of place. Therefore it was useful to explore how cultural and social aspects of remembering, set within a broad place attachment analysis, may yield fresh insights into the nature of multiple and transnational connections situated in the local. In the focused discussion I outline the key findings to emerge from this analysis.

6.2.1 Memory, place and multiple attachments.

Memory is entwined with everyday practice, and the particularity of individual attachments is shaped by known landscapes past and present. Massey discusses the “simultaneity of stories-so-far” (2005, p.9). These research projects recount landscape experiences from people at a point in their lives post-international migration, mostly fairly recent arrivals but including some who had lived in Sheffield for decades. Through working with both refugees and those who moved of their own choice, it has been possible to trace some of the complexities of emotions and place allied with notions of individual agency. The findings inform rich understandings of the possibilities of place attachment as multiple and simultaneous, and gives more information to work by Mah (2009), Bonnett and Alexander (2013), Greene et al. (2011) and Fullilove (2014) on the role of place attachment in retaining a sense of self-continuity in disruptive life events.

I propose that place attachment is actively supported by a remembering and re-imagining. The process of making sense of a new place, and of finding a ‘niche’ within it, requires a creative engaging with one’s own environmental memories, a recognising of cultural and temporal patterns that allow insights into unfamiliar places. Does this mean old ways of being in new places? Certainly the ability to ‘be oneself’ was greatly supported when migrants could make connections between past and present places, and was particularly significant in terms of doing, the physical performance of activities: socialising, shopping, driving or growing vegetables. But finding new approaches and oblique strategies was also vital, and participants in the research often took pride in how they had both adapted old preferences, and found novel delights, in this new home.

The role of memory in place attachment is not simply a form of nostalgia, a looking backwards, but an emotional process in which the local and the transnational are reconciled by simple engagements and practices (Boym, 2001). So this act of ‘becoming attached’ requires an engagement with outdoor places, and this engagement can, over time, establish forms of place attachment that promote a sense of personal and social belonging.

This conception of place attachment challenges a traditional notion of rootedness, and emphasises both networked and nested - broad and deep – dimensions (Armstrong, 2004). Migrant experiences span breadth of attachment, conceptually holding in tension on-going transnational connections, a mental map of being local in different places. However, this research also highlights the depth of place attachment when it is construed through processes of layering of previous and present landscapes. Memories ‘nest’ within new places, and are accrued anew. These shifts of perception over time also give insights into the role of place attachment in providing some definition to the nature of migrant identities, of growing older, and of finding one’s place in the world.

6.3 To explore how cultural values regarding landscape inform the everyday experiences of using outdoor spaces in superdiverse urban contexts.

Ethnographic urban studies from sociology, anthropology and social geography have been vital in furthering debate on the social constructions of place, but are curiously detached from the physicality of designed urban environments. In debates on geographies of encounter (Amin, 2002; Valentine, 2008; Neal et al., 2013) the physicality and design of the ‘where’ is largely missing. Research on placemaking and migration addresses this to some extent: Rios and Vasquez (2012), Hou (2013), Manzo (2011) and Sen (2013) all examine the specific ways in which diverse urban spaces are appropriated and changed due to changing populations. My work builds on and contributes to both bodies of literature, addressing materiality and temporality of experiences of urban places, while attending to nuanced dimensions of sociability. The focus on less obvious intercultural places, such as urban greenspace and unbounded streetspace, helps broaden the scope of transcultural urbanism (Hou, 2013) where there is a tendency to focus on ‘ethnoscapes’, dense urban places of clustered, sudden or commercialised ethnic identity.

Within the debates of geographies of encounter these findings broadly support the importance of the visibility of multicultural (Wessendorf, 2013), and demonstrate the nuance and temporal qualities that are important to migrants in the everyday places of daily life. Overlapping use of public space by people from different

ethnic communities offers opportunities for gradual informal contact and give a visual shared recognition to the diversity of a neighbourhood. The community identity as defined within an ethnic group and within a multicultural neighbourhood were both important. However, the ability to make choices about when to engage with one's own ethnic group, and when to retreat from the expectations of this 'public gaze' was also valued (Powell and Rishbeth, 2012). Use of public greenspace was informed by cultural values, and engagement was most likely when participants could envisage realistic possibilities for life benefits such as opportunities to relax, socialise, play sport, be entertained or enjoy plants (Rishbeth and Finney, 2006).

Within this broader context, the discussion below focuses on whether urban outdoor public space is important in supporting social integration.

6.3.1 Being visible: urban landscapes of integration.

My research has addressed how first generation migrants encounter the city, participate in its diversity, and are enabled within and by the outdoor public realm. Do the findings support notions of 'contact theory' (Allport, 1954), suggesting that informal contact in diverse neighbourhoods increases integration, or is this a rose-tinted view (Amin, 2002; Valentine, 2008)?

Refugees and asylum seekers are in particular situations of comparative powerlessness; often isolated, disorientated, impoverished and deskilled within their new environment. My research suggests that the complexity of the urban landscape can be hostile and illegible to negotiate, but starting to establish patterns of use can be instrumental in gaining confidence. The visibility of everyday life outdoors provides a means of tacit learning, allows for nuanced positioning (spatial and temporal) and a gradual increase in number and quality of interactions.

In particular, the findings suggest that the visual permeability of outdoor places can support normalisation of difference, a commonplace diversity within a neighbourhood profile (Wessendorf, 2013). Viewing into and through public places can provide information on how to navigate and 'read' the urban landscape. This can help individuals find places and routes that feel safe and to identify ways

in which they can participate. How a person moves and pauses in their daily local journeys potentially facilitates repeated incidental interactions, building neighbourliness, and giving scope for friendliness (Hudson, 2012).

Participants in both research projects valued spending time outdoors. Positive experiences of being outdoors, especially for new migrants, can play a role in fostering a sense of personal belonging and of making visible culturally diverse communities. The idea of ‘meaningful contact’ is contested (Philips and Robinson, 2015), and close relationships are not often forged on serendipitous meetings outside. But the findings indicate that relationships of different kinds can be strengthened by being able to spend longer periods of time outdoors, and the fluidity and range of transcultural practices that shape these encounters.

In particular, for first generation migrants, it is useful to recognise that socialising outside is a common practice in many parts of the world. Groups of migrants who find ways to continue this, sometimes adapting to fit different climates, often find it of central importance in countering isolation. Though these types of outdoor gathering are primarily ‘bonding’ rather than ‘bridging’ contact (Putnam, 2000, 22-24), the outdoor contexts are fundamentally more open to fluidity of encounter compared to indoor locations. Urban places which are designed to facilitate a range of different forms of socialising, often for larger sized groups, are beneficial.

Other patterns of public space use by migrants increase the chances of new bridging encounters. A significant minority within the participant groups across both projects actively embraced exploring the city and sought out opportunities for new experiences. Places which feel secure, legible and well maintained are found to be more inclusive and welcoming. The findings support Dines et al. (2006) in the importance of places of visible public activity, such as markets, playgrounds and festivals, where barriers to participation are minimised and it is possible to be together by doing together. Use of these spaces can lead to ‘loose ties’ which are seen as important to individual and community resilience (Hudson, 2012). Visibility of multiculturalism, of seeing people from different ethnic backgrounds, increases as a result of a genuinely representative mix of residents feeling able to

use public space, and this in turn can support a shared local sense of belonging (Rishbeth and Powell, 2013).

The research recognises other contexts where aggravations occur when different cultures of use are in conflict and seen as threatening, though this did not emerge as a strong theme in these projects and locations. Instead, the ‘big picture’ is that increased use develops individual and collective values of shared belonging, which support increased confidence in using outdoor spaces. This can be seen as a virtuous cycle within superdiverse urban neighbourhoods.

The implications for landscape practice clearly develop from these understandings and are explored in more detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 7. Implications for landscape architectural practice

The research was intended to generate findings that would inform landscape architects and allied professionals working in ethnically diverse contexts. Entering academia from landscape practice, I was aware of the paucity of information on social diversity in the built environment, and how this can impact negatively on practice and cultural awareness in many urban areas.

Viewfinder and Walking Voices are small scale, qualitative, single-city research projects with low numbers of participants, and it would be inappropriate to generalise 'best practice' from these cases. However, qualitative research can surface questions and values that are difficult to uncover using quantitative methods. My own relationship with the process and outcomes of the research is also important. For the eight years represented here I have read widely, planned, written, redrafted, presented, answered questions and generated discussions in many different contexts about the issues raised through this research. So though the material generated directly within the research projects does not directly lead to practical guidelines, longer-term complex and multi-layered responses to the findings are integral to the academic work of drawing out impact for policy and landscape practice.

Though not included as submitted papers within this thesis, within both projects I produced non-academic visually rich summaries of the research, distributed as hard copies in professional contexts, posted to relevant organisations, and available digitally (Rishbeth, 2005; Rishbeth, 2007). The Walking Voices project also developed a dedicated website with audio clips and future information about the research².

This chapter describes three key implications for landscape and urban design, primarily focussed on residential neighbourhoods. This area of practice is almost entirely un-researched, especially in the UK context, and as such is valuable to prompt debate and shape future questions for research. It concludes with a brief

² <http://www.walkingvoices.group.shef.ac.uk>

discussion of the broader practice of landscape planning and management and professional roles within the landscape profession.

7.1 Permeability and flexibility: maximise visibility and choice.

Notions of visual and physical permeability (Gehl et al. 2006) suggest that the boundary conditions of places in an urban landscape are relevant in supporting diverse and serendipitous interactions, and in reducing harassment and crime. Gehl et al. (2006) argue that high levels of visual permeability (the ability to see into a space in multiple ways before entering into it) supports confidence in moving through landscapes, especially in unknown or socially ambiguous situations. Visual permeability is potentially useful for increasing social networks, as it allows people to scope a public space to see who is about. Physical permeability (the ability to move easily in and out of specific areas) is important for supporting choice of route.

My research underlines the importance of sociability in public places as a vital means of addressing isolation, especially relevant to new migrants with embryonic social networks. Urban landscapes need to be designed to be legible, with reasonably open sight lines and with focal places designed to encourage pausing. Locations where people naturally gather (such as shopping precincts, school gates, bus stops) should be prioritised as places which feel secure, comfortable and pleasurable to spend time. High level of visual and physical permeability can ease exploration of new areas (for example the locations of playgrounds), helps feelings of personal safety, and helps new users understand appropriate uses of places. On a longer term basis, places with high visual permeability support informal social contact, the ‘bumping into’ of people you might know from other contexts, and a visual sense of being within a multi-ethnic neighbourhood. This sense of a located everyday multiculturalism (Wise and Velayutham, 2009) was important to many participants.

How places may be used flexibly and adapted for a range of social functions was also important. Franck and Stevens (2007) coined the term ‘loose space’ to promote the importance in locations characterized by social flow (by implication superdiverse places) and discussed the importance of design that allows for

flexibility and that maximizes the range of affordances. They set out the importance of embracing this quality: “Free access to a variety of public open spaces, anonymity among strangers, a diversity of persons and a fluidity of meaning are all urban conditions that support looseness” (ibid, p.4). What aspects of ‘looseness’ are foregrounded by the research participants in this research? A variety of ways in which groups can sit together is important (and at odds with the British tradition of benches suitable for two or three people only). Residential street space was used in various ways for children’s play, mending cars, and gathering outside the Mosque, and in commercial streets shop activities spill out onto the pavements (Hall, 2015). However, it must also be noted that, especially for recent arrivals to the UK (more commonly the Viewfinder participants) it was important for urban greenspace to be legible, with a clear understanding of which activities and uses are permissible. The Viewfinder participants preferred visiting public places that were neat and tidy, well maintained and with specific things to do, and this was important in reducing anxiety. The ambiguities of looser (or messier) space were a barrier to use. Highly preferred places, such as the Peace Gardens (a city centre plaza with water features) and the Botanical Gardens manage to combine a clear sense of order with a playful quality of diverse ways of relaxing.

7.2 Prospect refuge: create conditions for safety and sociability.

Prospect and Refuge theory (Appleton, 1975) highlights the psychological importance of places that allow a person to be protected - not vulnerable to surprise or attack – but also affords them the ability to look out and see what is happening. The term is commonly used by designers in assessing the qualities of points of stopping and sitting. This theory underlines the importance of edge spaces (for example, of a green space or square) and gives credence to a territorial dynamic at play in how different groups of people (of particular age, gender or ethnic group) might appropriate micro-places. Places of prospect-refuge allow for acoustically private conversations in a way that is visible to others and clearly in a public realm. If well designed or located, points of prospect refuge are also good in terms of microclimate, as they may offer partial shelter from a prevailing wind or make the most of a sunny spot.

Seating locations that are pleasant to use and encourage extended times spent outside are important for many user groups. Social gathering and exchange are intrinsic to many cultural patterns of open space use, especially in non-Western countries. My research indicates three aspects of prospect/refuge seating design that are particularly important to people from migrant backgrounds. First, absorbing the common culture and norms of activity of everyday life is important for new migrants, so spending time in the public realm can be a vital help, especially if it is possible to sit awhile in an unobtrusive spot, watching but not feeling watched. Second, any design that enhances microclimate is especially valued by the majority of new migrants who are adjusting to life in a cooler country. Third, people from non-white backgrounds are statistically more likely to be victims of crime, in particular hate crime (Ministry of Justice, 2013), so designing places which are safe to use is especially important.

7.3 Support restorative environments: planting in everyday places.

For new migrants, adjusting to significantly different places of living seems to be eased when they discover glimpses of familiarity. This may be through patterns of activity or within the physical environment. Through the Viewfinder project, I discovered that these points of recognition were unpredictable – a view, a rock, a plant – and generally not objects or contexts that one would consider typically symbolic of another country. Despite climate and ecology being some of the clear objective differences between the UK and the home countries of the participants, plants and patterns of vegetation were commonly mentioned as prompting memories of home. This may be partly due to the wide range of non-native plants that grow in British gardens and parks. But it also potentially reflects obliqueness in the way in which humans engage with nature and natural patterns, and how the sensory and temporal qualities of growing places are inherently open to ambiguous interpretation and reflection.

Mental health can be negatively affected by a number of factors that are more commonly experienced by people from migrant communities including experience of insecurity or social isolation, living in higher crime areas, being victims of racial abuse or hate crime, or suffering discrimination (Raphaely and O'Moore, 2010; Jayaweera, 2014). Within both research projects is an implicit thread which

links being in green public spaces to senses of wellbeing and stress release, and supports the body of literature on urban greening and wellbeing (Muirhead, 2011). Though the cultural and practical barriers to using parks should not be dismissed, both in designated greenspace and informal streetscapes it is significant the extent that trees, flowers, fruit and seasonal change was a cause for positive comment. A challenge for urban design professionals is how to improve the quality of the built environment and improve access to planted and natural places in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Landscape design and management that aims to improve positive mental health is an agenda with racialised dimensions and embedded in a broader drive for social justice.

7.4 The broader contexts: social justice and landscape architecture.

It is important to conclude this chapter by drawing together two significant and vital agendas; both of which have shaped my research and may be impacted by its achievements. The first is the crucial drive for social justice and equity, acknowledging the role that racism has played and still plays in how public space is experienced, is controlled and how resources are allocated. As a researcher my remit is varied – to surface stories, to raise awareness, to have a positive impact on the participants and contexts of the research. As well as making an ongoing individual commitment to standing and acting against racism, sexism and other intersections of the less powerful, there also needs to be a commitment to using influence. This can be through raising the status of these issues (and I am well aware that this is entrenched in my own vested interests as an academic), interrupting within professional and academic environments in which a colour-blind approach is a comfortable norm, and aiming to be reflective and credible when called upon as an ‘expert’.

The second vital context is that of the professional sphere of landscape architecture. This chapter has aimed to summarise some of the specific qualities that I draw out as important when designing as a culturally competent practitioner. More broadly, I would set out three challenges for the profession of landscape architecture, my profession. First, we need to apply all our skills and sensibilities to plan, design and effectively maintain pleasurable outdoor places in less wealthy areas of a city, addressing the environmental injustice of access to good quality

greenspace (CABE Space, 2010; Agyeman, 2013). Second, we need to attract and support a broader ethnic mix of landscape architects (Gonzalez and Irazabal, 2015). Thirdly, we need to have the confidence to articulate how landscape architecture is not an ethically neutral activity, but one that can and should activity address social justice (Agyeman and Erickson, 2012).

Chapter 8. Conclusion

This thesis has represented and discussed a body of research with the overall aim of examining how first generation migrants experience local urban landscapes.

Across the two research projects I identified four unifying aims:

1. To understand the benefits and barriers to using urban public open space by people who are first generation migrants.
2. To understand how place attachment may be shaped by personal histories of migration.
3. To explore how cultural values regarding landscape inform the everyday experiences of using spaces in superdiverse urban contexts.
4. To discuss implications for the practice of landscape architecture.

The methodological approach of the research projects integrated sustained on-site methods with visual and audio creative content, creating a reflective space for nuanced and complex records of place experience.

8.1 Overview of key academic contexts

These findings contribute to the literature base across a number of disciplinary areas. My findings add much needed diversity and detail to studies of urban greenspace (Byrne and Wolch, 2009; Kloek et al., 2013), giving some clarity to the motivations and barriers to use of parks in the UK by people from migrant groups, and, unusually, the experience of young asylum seekers and refugees. I have been able to develop deeper understandings of place attachment as a reflection of transnational identities, largely supporting and refining previous research (Ehrkamp, 2005; Lager et al., 2012). My research challenges the work of researchers on life post migration (Anderson and Keith, 2014) to consider how time spent in the urban outdoors can support personal wellbeing and a sense of local belonging, and draws on some of the work on environmental dimensions of wellbeing (Maller et al., 2006). Within the debates of geographies of encounter (Amin, 2002; Valentine, 2008; Neal et al., 2013; Philips and Robinson, 2015) these findings support the importance of the visibility of multiculturalism (Wessendorf, 2013), and demonstrate the nuance and temporal qualities that are important to

migrants in the everyday places of daily life. The focus on less obvious intercultural places, such as urban greenspace and unbounded streetspace, helps broaden the scope of transcultural urbanism (Hou, 2013) where there is a tendency to focus on ‘ethnoscapes’, dense urban places of intense, rapidly changing or commercialised ethnic identity.

8.2 Summary findings organised by research aims

Benefits and barriers to using urban public open space by people who are first generation migrants.

Spending time outside is an important means by which first generation migrants feel a sense of agency and belonging in a neighbourhood context. Use of more formal public spaces (such as parks) is limited; recent migrants priorities were meeting basic needs and they usually do not have the motivation or confidence to explore new places. Social contexts are often important in how migrants feel they can use public spaces, and the lack of this can compound isolation and withdrawal from the public realm. Use of public space is gendered and informed by age and family responsibilities, these can have specific implications when intersected with ethnic identities. Though the research supports use of urban greenspace as beneficial to individual and collective wellbeing, it underlines the critical importance of understanding cultural dimensions to visiting parks and other types of greenspace.

Place attachment shaped by personal histories of migration.

The way in which migrants evaluate their local environment is often shaped by their experience of past places, and previous expectations of life in the UK. Memories of home countries can be prompted in unexpected ways and usually provide delight and a sense of continuity. Social and recreational use of outdoor spaces that reflect cultural identities and communities, in particular patterns of gathering, are much valued. Place attachment is strengthened by participation and familiarity in a local located community, and often by recognising transcultural connections.

Everyday experience of using outdoor spaces in superdiverse urban contexts.

The overlapping use of public space by people from different ethnic communities offers opportunities for gradual informal contact and gives a visual shared recognition to the diversity of a neighbourhood. The community identity as defined within an ethnic group and within a multicultural neighbourhood were both important. However, the ability to make choices about when to engage with one's own ethnic group, and when to retreat from the expectations of this 'public gaze' was also valued. Use of public greenspace was informed by cultural values, and engagement was most likely when participants could envisage realistic possibilities for life benefits such as opportunities to relax, socialise, play sport, be entertained or enjoy plants.

Implications for practice of landscape architecture.

Landscape architects need to become more culturally literate in acknowledging the ethnic diversity of many urban contexts, and understanding different social and cultural values with regard to recreation, socialising, and natural places. Priorities should be to design places which accommodate flexible uses, maximise seating opportunities (especially for larger groups), allow for restorative contact with plants, and that are easily legible and safe to use. Landscape Architects should advocate for high standards of maintenance and facility provision in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and consider how their work and professional voice can contribute positively with regard to social justice.

8.3 Reflection

Over the decade represented here I have grown immensely as a researcher, the crux of this being the relationship between landscape architecture (and specifically landscape design) and sociological geographical disciplines. In engaging with these allied academic fields I have been continuously been challenged: in reflectivity, in interpretation and representation of qualitative data, in careful contextualising in social, historical and political contexts, in dealing with ambiguity and nuance and in accurate writing. Developing confidence is a necessity for many academics, and my own challenge is the need to hold my position as a unique voice within these fields. I have needed to negotiate and develop my own expertise as a landscape designer and learn to 'bring it to the

table', clarifying my own academic specialism as specifically focused on landscape experience, and the design and use of public open space.

The challenge of raising the profile of more reflective understanding of social practice in a profession where the day to day focus is on contracts, specifications, budgets and clients is not one I can claim to have overcome. The non-academic outputs received little feedback from potential users for the research, and there is a need for a more strategic approach to developing impact for practice. I have a three fold plan for future development. Firstly, future research needs to be more explicitly co-produced with communities or practitioners. This has been implemented in my recent research project addressing social functions of benches in ethnically diverse areas, where I collaborated with The Young Foundation and Greenwich Inclusion Project. Second, I will explicitly integrate my research practice with teaching landscape architecture, engaging students with the findings of my research, developing a lively post-graduate research group (Transnational Urban Outdoors) and delivering a lecture series within the masters level curriculum (The Changing Cultures of Urban Life). Thirdly, I will take greater initiative in developing networks across landscape architecture and related fields that bridge academic research and professional practice. I recently facilitated a symposium to bring together academic and landscape design practitioners which specifically engaged with some of the themes highlighted in chapter 7.

There are multiple directions for future research, in particular ones that directly relate to the four identified interdisciplinary areas of urban greenspace, wellbeing and migration, place attachment, and encounter in intercultural places. Current research – both directly by myself and by members of my research group – includes work on sites of micro-encounters in designed public space (The Un-Sociable Bench, an AHRC funded project) and ethnographic work on use of public spaces in Bradford and Page Hall in Sheffield. In reflecting on higher level cross cutting themes I believe research on landscape experience in superdiverse contexts needs to be an integral component of addressing the role and remit of landscape architecture in an era of austerity, transience in urban places and in research on healthy liveable cities of the future.

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PART TWO: Publications

Publication 1

Rishbeth, C. and Finney, N. (2006) Novelty and Nostalgia in urban greenspace – refugee perspectives. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 7(1), pp.27-46.

CLARE RISHBETH AND NISSA FINNEY

NOVELTY AND NOSTALGIA IN URBAN GREENSPACE: REFUGEE PERSPECTIVES

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates migrants’ perceptions and experiences of urban green spaces. The research used innovative participatory and visual (photography) methods and the 12 week programme included visits to 10 green spaces in Sheffield. The participants were all asylum seekers and refugees from Asia and Africa.

This paper discusses how and why the participants engaged or disengaged with local greenspace in the short and medium term. In particular, the importance of memory and nostalgia in participants’ experiences; the significance of plants; the novelty of visiting British ‘parks’; and the role of greenspace in enhancing the quality of life of immigrants are explored. The paper concludes that a positive impression of the local environment and meaningful participation in it can be a useful component of integration into a new society. Furthermore, recognition of landscape elements or characteristics can provide a conceptual link between former and new homes. However, for this refugee group many physical and psychological barriers must be overcome if the full benefits of urban public open space are to be realised.

Keywords: public open space, refugees, memory, participatory research, visual methods, Sheffield.

INTRODUCTION

Access and use of public open space has been shown to have wide-ranging benefits for human wellbeing. In particular, spaces that are green and represent nature within an urban context are seen as a positive part of the life of many urban dwellers. This benefit is understood to be both physical (providing opportunities for both gentle and energetic exercise) and psychological (reducing stress by providing places of escape and play) (Woolley, 2003, ODPM, 2002). In looking at how these benefits may be realised by different sectors of society, it is important to recognise the specific potential for groups and individuals who may often be disenfranchised from recreational opportunities. This research considers the experience and possible advantages for asylum seekers and refugees¹.

Most research undertaken regarding refugees and asylum seekers focuses on basic rights, legalities and on experiences of migration, with wider quality of life issues receiving little attention (Stewart, 2004). Themes such as leisure and relaxation preferences and healthy living habits of refugees are under-researched by the relevant academic fields. This paper discusses the opportunities of the city environment for refugees and asylum seekers, and explores how urban greenspaces may be accessed and enjoyed as restorative experiences.

Use of urban greenspaces for recreation has the important advantage of being local and free of charge. In and near British cities there are a range of types of public landscape including municipal parks and playgrounds, overgrown cemeteries, regenerated wasteland, local nature reserves, canal side walks and country parks. How residents of a city chose to use - or not use - these diverse spaces can depend on factors of convenience, need for facilities and, crucially, preferences and perceptions of green space developed through the course of their life experience.

Theories of environmental preference have been developed by cultural geographers and environmental psychologists to explore the link between people, place and constructs of nature (Porteous, 1996). The extent to which background

and cultural identity shape patterns of visual and experiential preference is fundamental to this enquiry but defies simple resolution. The Kaplans' work (for example, Kaplan and Kaplan, 1982) emphasises the importance of the conceptual understandings of landscape, that the "*environment extends beyond the physically present objects to those that are potentially present... memories of past experiences, images of distant lands and of not-yet-present futures*" (p.3). The underlying stories, myths and resonances will in part be formed by a shared history and are in part personal. Cultural understandings may be shaped by religious or social beliefs and practices, or by the characteristics of the landscape itself (Tuan, 1974, Dearden, 1989, Gell, 1995). The combination of physical and human complexities of urban environments, and the rate of change of these factors prompt further issues regarding the 'place and placenessness' of cities (Relph, 1976); of how social identity may be understood and addressed, not only in personal responses to places but in the design of the public realm.

The term 'place attachment' (Altman and Low, 1992) was coined to describe the strength of association between a person's culture and personal identity and places known to them. Typically, this is demonstrated by long term connections, for example in agrarian societies and in close knit neighbourhoods where residence spans generations. The importance of childhood memories of experiencing landscape in forming adult preferences is highlighted in this and other studies (Lyons, 1983, Ward Thompson, 2004). Though this experience may resonate with individuals, it can potentially be used to imply insular, insider positioning to be of prime importance regarding concern and engagement with locality. Equating belonging and familiarity is problematic in many contexts, but particularly in cities, such as Sheffield, characterised by mobile, transnational populations.

The landscape experience of migrant communities and individuals, and how the physical break with the homeland of childhood may affect relationships to landscapes of the new country is relatively under-researched. The relationship between familiarity and environmental preference is important to address in this context (Riley, 1992). The experience of moving from one country, climate and culture to another affects individuals differently. Research has been carried out which looks at the role of the physical environment in culture shock (Churchman

and Mitrani,1997), adjustments of leisure patterns (Tirone and Shaw,1997, Stodolska,1998) and the role of objects and homemaking in adjusting and making links with the new culture (Bir,1992, Boym,2001). Though generally not directly connected to experience of public open space, these studies point to the importance of involvement and embodied experience of physical relocation. The role of environment, and the chance to participate in the life and process of change of a person's immediate location, can be linked to issues of territoriality and representation (Rishbeth,2001).

Studies on differences in environmental preference by ethnicity, and perceptions of the familiar and the exotic, are contradictory (Nasar,1988). The body of literature points to subtle personal distinctions between high / low familiarity being a negative experience ("That's old stuff" / "That's very strange") or a positive one ("There's no place like home" / "That's wonderful"), (Porteous, 1996, p126). Churchman and Mitrani (1997), in a study of preference of Russian (sic) migrants in Israel found that the number and type of parks were aspects of the homeland neighbourhood environment most strongly missed by migrants. Crucially, this was less strongly experienced by people who had a positive reason for migration. There is also scattered but consistent evidence that immigrants often frame new landscapes as a reminder of past landscapes. Examples of nostalgia being actively triggered by views and experiences of outdoor landscapes are described in a number of studies across a range of different landscape types (Rishbeth, 2004, Burgess et al,1988, Wong,1996).

These themes relate to use of public space, and particularly why public space may or may not be used by people from different ethnic backgrounds. There is a body of evidence that suggests that black and Asian communities visit the countryside and urban open spaces less frequently than people from white communities (Morris, 2003). Some research has been carried out, mainly in the USA, which supports the recognition of diversity of patterns of use according to ethnic background in local urban parks (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995, Zhang and Gobster, 1998). These studies are useful but limited by a tendency to focus on one particular type of landscape, large municipal parks. They also rely primarily on quantitative methods, leading to relatively weak findings with regard to sense of

personal identity and affection for place. Burgess (1988) provides a more comprehensive insight into the issues in her study of London Parks using focus groups, in which themes of nostalgia for past landscapes and social use of parks emerged as key issues. A study of Independence Park in Philadelphia, USA, also explores issues of interpretation and engagement with a historical landscape by local people from diverse ethnic groups (Low et al, 2002). Current research focuses almost exclusively on settled migrant communities, rather than the experience of comparatively isolated and un-settled refugees and asylum seekers.

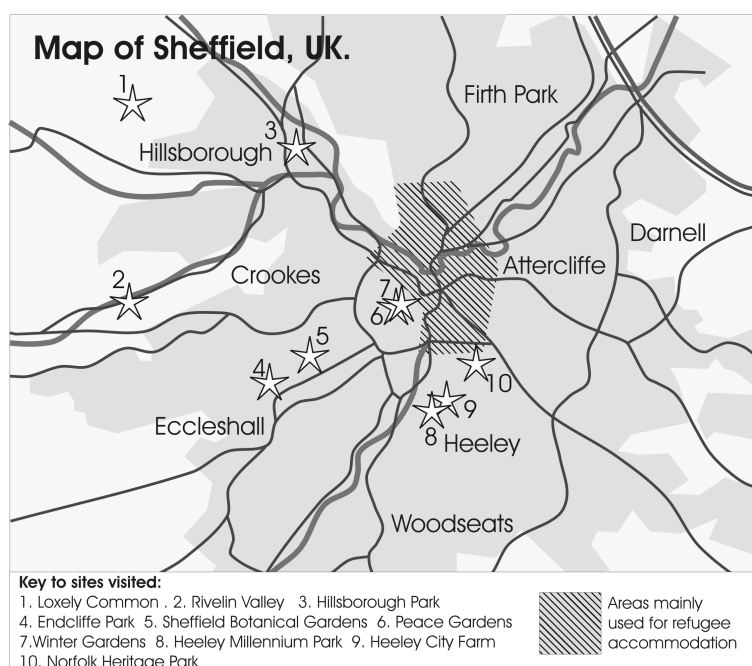
The paucity of research in this area limits an understanding of meanings associated with landscape and recreation held by refugee migrants, and leads to policies, design and management of public spaces for this (potential) user group based on guesswork. The aim of this research project was to investigate the experience of exploring local urban greenspace by a group of refugee participants. It addressed short and long term motivations and barriers to visiting, and examined preferences for differing landscape types. In particular, it hoped to understand how experiential knowledges of landscapes of home and settlement interact, and how refugees make sense of the new environments in the light of their past experiences. In order to achieve this depth of analysis in a small scale project, it was decided to utilise qualitative, longitudinal and participatory methodologies. We considered it important that participants from the refugee community, seldom given a public ‘voice’, were able to represent their own narratives of exploring landscapes.

METHODOLOGY

The project aimed to take an innovative approach to landscape research, and attempted to address some of the limitations of traditional qualitative research techniques such as interviews, focus groups or written accounts. In particular, the methods used give greater priority to experiential and visual forms of enquiry, and achieving a more equal sharing of ‘benefit’ between participant and researcher. We combined emerging qualitative research methods and ideas, freely adapting these to achieve objectives with regard to the research topic and to respond to the specific nature of the participant group.

The research was developed in close partnership with TIV², a voluntary sector media training organisation. ‘Fieldwork’ was conducted by means of a twelve week Open College Network accredited basic photography programme, the subject of which was urban open space. In total there were six participants, all asylum seekers and refugees, and ten sites in Sheffield were visited. Techniques for using the photographic output as part of the research included on-site tasks (such as taking photos to express themes) and workshop based photo-elicitation activities such as individual and group discussions, producing collages and preparation for a photographic exhibition (Harper,2002, Banks,2001). Participants also took a photo-journal of outdoor places they visited independently over the course of a week. Taking photographs was an enjoyable activity for the group and allowed the topics that were explored to be partially participant-directed.

By undertaking visits the group was able to jointly explore a range of open spaces and record their experiences through taking photos. Types of urban greenspace were chosen to differ in terms of their purpose, size, spatial qualities and vegetation types; and included highly managed formal gardens, world plant collections, Victorian heritage parks, semi-natural urban fringe woodland and heathland, a community managed park and urban farm, plus two park based festivals (Map 1: location of sites). As part of the group, researchers were able to observe and discuss immediate reactions with participants (Burgess, 1995).



Map 1: location of sites

The methodology employed for this project was to a large extent successful. The photography course ensured twelve weeks of contact with participants which was invaluable in building trust and a supportive environment for discussion with this refugee and asylum seeker group. An important principle in developing the methodology was that participants should receive tangible benefit from taking part in the research. The success in retaining all six participants, despite their complex and unstructured life situations, should be noted. The participants benefited not only from the training provision, but also from the enjoyable experience of the park visits and the development of friendly relationships within the project group.

Using photography generated rich research material and to some extent overcame language barriers. However, our collaboration with TIV was not unproblematic, largely because of our different expectations and definitions of photography training. As a result, the participants did not develop their skills of visually communicating their experiences of landscape as much as we had hoped (for further discussion of dilemmas raised in collaborative landscape research see Finney and Rishbeth forthcoming). Nevertheless, this project's focus on visual and experiential qualitative methods gave an insight into a marginalised group's experiences of urban greenspace that would have been impossible with more traditional approaches.

The Participants - The six participants (five male, one female) were all asylum seekers or refugees living in Sheffield. They ranged in age from 17 to 45. They were from Afghanistan, Rwanda, Somalia, Zimbabwe and Liberia and have lived in the UK between 6 months and 2½ years. Some had right of permanent residence (refugee status), others had been granted humanitarian protection with time-limited leave to remain in the UK, and one was appealing against a refusal decision of his asylum application. Mostly they were living in council flats, were unemployed (either officially or without permission to work) and undertaking English classes. With the exception of the youngest participant, all were separated from other members of their family. The participants seemed to enjoy living in Sheffield, and on a number of occasions volunteered comments on the friendliness

of the city. Most had lived elsewhere in the UK for a number of months, and compared Sheffield favourably to these other places.

A limited amount of information was gleaned throughout the project about the home country backgrounds of the participants, and researchers used a final individual interview to confirm and clarify this. The African participants generally had some level of education and spoke English with reasonable proficiency. The two Afghani men had low standards of English and no formal educational background. All had lived in cities for some or most of their lives. However, all were familiar with staying with relatives in rural areas and therefore had common experiences of both urban and rural living and a strong sense of the countryside as a productive landscape. The experience of living in a near continuous war situation in Afghanistan meant that the Afghani participants had been restricted in their use of the public environment both rural and urban.

Analysis and Dissemination - The materials used in order to investigate the research themes included participants' photographs, individual and group interviews, and observations made by researchers during the project³. This material was engaged with reflexively, with the use of NUDIST 6 qualitative analysis software to aid in organising themes. The primary 'public face' output of the research was a touring exhibition that was displayed in public locations in Sheffield and in professional contexts throughout the UK. The exhibition was curated in order to express research findings by combining participants' photographs with quotes from interviews and discussions.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF VISITS TO OPEN SPACES

Analysis of the material initially focused on the group members' immediate reactions to the open spaces; that which attracted or confused; and which aspects emerged as the focus of photography and discussions. These have been organised into two key themes of 'novelty' and 'nostalgia'.

The general response to the sites was almost entirely positive, yet involvement in the project did not appear to translate into increased use of urban greenspace as a

leisure facility by the participants. Therefore it was important to question the findings at a deeper level of longer term engagement and detachment from greenspace environments. Our understandings of the participants' everyday life priorities, gained through our ongoing contact with the group, proved to be essential in allowing us to set the 'Viewfinder' experience into the wider context of refugee life. Through this process of addressing both the 'hooks' of different types of urban greenspace, and ongoing development of attachment, the research has attempted to identify implications for greenspace design and management, for refugee integration and issues to be addressed in future research.

Novelty - New experiences encountered in the parks surprised participants during the visits. Some of the participants had experienced life in large cities in Africa and had some memories of park space in their childhood, but for others (especially the Afghanis) the concept of a park was entirely new. There was little collective understanding of the range of parks and urban green spaces in the UK, or prior understanding of what might be expected of these places. This was especially the case with places that challenged the traditional municipal park image: the city farm, the semi-natural areas or the botanical collections. This element of surprise was usually positive, and the group often expressed delight at what they were learning or experiencing for the first time. The visits contrasted with their fairly routine everyday experiences, and proved to be popular with most participants as relaxing, stimulating and social occasions.

Though the participants found the existence and character of many of the green spaces unexpected, certain items were particularly unusual and provoked amusement. The position of the researchers often became that of cultural interpreters, explaining the purpose or use of specific elements in the parks. Some of these would be considered novel by the designers and most visitors, such as an artificial climbing boulder in the community park, and public artwork such as a carved totem pole. However, some elements which were new to the participants would not normally be seen as unusual within a British context. The concept of providing boxes in trees for birds to live in seemed to simultaneously shock and delight the group and was one memorable moment when the cultural divide between their home countries and the UK was illuminated. Though the group were

aware of the purpose of play equipment most had not experienced playing on it before. Once we had assured them that this was allowed they enjoyed the fun of this new opportunity. The collection of hanging baskets in the city farm equally provided them with a source of joy at the beauty of the flowers and was a popular backdrop for photos (fig.1).



Figure 1: Hanging baskets at Heeley City Farm

A slightly different aspect of novelty that the visits offered the participants was opportunities to make sense of the city of Sheffield; geographically, historically and culturally. The role of the researchers as ‘tour guides’ was important in this respect; most of the group seemed to find the potted history given at the beginning of each site visit interesting. Sites which revealed something of their history through their physical character, for example, mill chases, overgrown quarries and ceremonial gateways, intrigued participants and tended to prompt questions. Participants highlighted the importance of the ‘educational value’ of visiting parks, valuing the fact that they could learn more about Britain. They also enjoyed views out across Sheffield that allowed them to comprehend a wider impression of the city beyond their normal routes.

This combination of surprise, pleasure and discovering new aspects of life in Sheffield emerged as important benefits of visiting the parks. In contrast to the mundane and dreary qualities of the participants’ daily lives, green spaces provide experiences that are visually attractive and encourage a playful, carefree attitude.

Surprise expressed by participants seemed not only to relate to the unexpected elements in the park, but in the overall quality of life available to them in the UK. One participant pointed out that the playground was very good because it was important to have things for children, and compared this to his home country of Afghanistan where there was no such provision. Items such as bird boxes, fountains and floral displays were startling to the participants not simply because they didn't know that they existed, but because they pointed to a lifestyle where pleasurable aspects of life are able to be publicly valued and freely shared.

Nostalgia - Participants' first impressions of the sites visited often elicited feelings of nostalgia, as they were reminded of places and times that they had known in the past. Often these reminders combined with a sense of surprise that not all aspects of British environments were unfamiliar to them. Though participants were enthusiastic and seemed happy when talking about these reminders of home, they also occasionally acknowledged that there were more complex emotions of loss raised by these experiences.

Some of the more naturalistic sites reminded participants from Africa of their home countries in terms of their landscape character. One was a highly wooded river valley (Rivelin Valley), which prompted discussion of rivers in rural areas. The other was a high level common ground (Loxley Common), characterised by heather, birch woodland and large rock boulders - remnants of quarrying activity now colonised by pioneer vegetation. Both the woodland and the rocks seemed to be significant in prompting detailed memories.

"This place remind me of when I live in Sierra Leone.. it remind me about the forest and the mountain and the rock... The bush was so green and the day was foggy you know. It remind me of when I was a little boy and me and my grandfather used to walk in the forest during the rainy season. [This place] surprised me". (Lamin, 30, from Liberia, in Sheffield 6 months; Fig.2)



Figure 2: Rivelin Valley: “It remind me of when I was a little boy and me and my grandfather used to walk in the forest during the rainy season”.

Landscapes and plants became the starting point for stories, small vignettes about home life, family outings, relaxation or leisure activities. “*This is like the road that we walked down to go to our farm*” (Lamin, Liberia), “*my country there are lots of big rocks... people they used to climb them... sit up on them*” (Firmina, Rwanda), “*In the village where we used to go at weekends, it was in the foothills of the mountains and we used to go climbing*” (Mansoor, Afghanistan). Even the traditionally English activity of bowls in a formal park prompted a memory of a game of stones that is played in Somalia. These observations allowed participants to express something about their past experience of normality, and to relate this normality to a British context. This could be with regard to a specific element of the landscape (rocks, trees), to activities or to social use of outdoor space.

Ward Thompson (2004) outlines the importance of childhood experiences of woodland in forming adult appreciation of woodland recreation in a study focused on Scottish adults and memories of Scottish woodlands. The Viewfinder research allows an insight into the question of how *alike* do these woodland environments need to be for nostalgia to play a role in appreciation of place. It suggests that childhood nostalgia for natural environments is not based on an ‘exact fit’ of memory to current landscape.

In many objective ways - botanically, geographically, culturally – the landscapes of Yorkshire and, for example, Rwanda, are very different. But these places, especially naturalistic environments, are ‘open to interpretation’. People bring their own stories, and their analysis of character of place is strongly experiential. A woodland, located in a specific location, with specific visual characteristics, can be recognised as ‘home-like’ by people whose home is in many different countries. In this sense, our landscapes are naturally ‘multicultural’. This is not to claim that landscapes are interchangeable. It is significant that the two Afghani participants generally did not find links between the comparatively lush environments of lowland Britain and the rugged open spaces of their home country. Memories that they described were more likely to focus on social occasions or outdoor activities.

Participants were delighted on the number of occasions when they found plants from their home country. Though this was sometimes in naturalistic locations (poppies and ferns in woodlands), most significant to the group were visits to the two greenhouse world plant collections in Sheffield, the Botanic Gardens and the Winter Gardens. Multi-sensory experiences of the plants were important.



Fig 3. When I find this I am reminded of my own country” Firmina

“The smell is very nice... I don’t know how I can explain it... when I found this it reminded me of my home country. It’s good, it’s nice”. (Firmina, 25, from Rwanda, in UK 2 years; Fig.3).

Boym (2001) raises issues of how experiences of nostalgia can be both a looking back (reflective nostalgia) and a means of integrating your past within a new future (restorative nostalgia). Though participants did relay their memories as a simple means of looking back at their past lives, in some cases these feelings were articulated as a means of making sense of their current identity as people from Africa or Asia living in the UK. With regard to the world plant collections, it also placed them in the position of being experts, in contrast to their usual UK experience.

“The Botanical Gardens was great. Every student on that course said ‘oh yeah, I know this from my country’. That was pleasing, to listen to the British people say ‘this is an exotic plant’, and I was saying ‘no, this is indigenous, it grows in the wild!’ That was great.” (Tendero, male, age 25 approx, from Zimbabwe, in UK less than 1 year).

Participants expressed feelings of pride when seeing and talking about plants from their home country, and identified these two gardens as being especially welcoming to them. This expression of the importance of being able to retain their national identity was also supported in the recognition of familiar landscape types. Firmina felt that in visiting Loxley Common with the rocks she could remind herself of what it is like to be in Rwanda, and even expressed a proposal for the future: *“When I want to feel like someone who is in Rwanda I can go there”*. These findings suggest that visiting parks and greenspaces and recognising familiar aspects of these can be helpful to refugees in integrating past and present locations and experiences.

ONGOING INDEPENDENT VISITS

Due to the longitudinal nature of the project, we were able to identify the gap between the positive first impressions participants had of visiting a park with the possibility of repeated visits. Through discussion with participants, use of photo journals and post project interviews, the research aimed to place the ‘first impressions’ of the staged visits into a wider context of how refugees may or may

not visit urban parks and greenspaces on an ongoing basis. Below we address aspects that engaged participants over time and those which resulted in detachment.

Engagement - Though our participants were diverse in cultural background, levels of confidence, interests and physical abilities, all of them needed to be able to *envisage realistic possibilities of life benefits* in visiting the parks as a pre-requisite to returning. Within this statement two key characteristics need to come together: being able to envisage personal benefits to visiting the sites, and the requirement that visiting the sites can be seen as ‘realistic’. In this discussion of engagement, we concentrate on factors which positively support repeat visits. Examination of the barriers and what hinders ‘realistic access’ is presented in the detachment section below.

Opportunities provided by parks attracted participants differently, as with any sector of the population. However, an interest in plants was shared by the group and often provided a focus for photography and discussion. All flowers were admired, especially colourful displays, and particularly when recognised from the home country. Participants talked about enjoyment of the plants as one of their main motivations for re-visiting, and spoke of their wish to bring friends with them to share the experience.

One of the key ways in which some male members of the group used green spaces outside of the Viewfinder project visits was by playing sport. One participant, despite having the weakest language skills of the group, had made a number of friends through informal football matches. This shared activity provided a means of integration with the wider community, and his photo diary showed him visiting the homes of his English friends.

“I play football every weekend if it’s not raining. With some friends, sometimes up to 40 people, some English, some Arabic people”. (Abdul, 40, from Afghanistan, in UK 2.5 years).

Participants interested in sport expressed general confidence in ‘inviting themselves into’ sporting activities taking place in parks, such as football and basketball. The chance to make contact with a range of people through informal and free access to outdoor sporting facilities could be one key means of achieving greater integration, especially for male refugees.

Local community festivals were much enjoyed by refugees, and provided a welcome chance for them to be involved in lively, free, communal entertainment. A number of these festivals take place in Sheffield every summer, and often have multi-cultural displays, dancing and food (fig.4). Though some participants visited festivals in groups, they also seemed comfortable to go along alone, possibly because there was plenty to engage their interest and they could merge into the crowd.



Figure 4: Local community festival with Zimbabwean dancers.

Participants enjoyed the site visits as part of the project mainly due to the social and relaxed nature of the occasions. These values were strongly expressed by the group as key positive benefits of visiting parks; participants represented parks as providing places of freedom and escape from worries. The social aspects were highly important, both in terms of visiting with friends and having ‘private conversations’ but also as places to meet people and make new friends.

“Rivelin Valley! I really liked it. Especially summer time, it’s very, very relaxing walking with people, talking to each other, your private things, like that you know, it’s really nice”. (Firmina, from Rwanda).

“That’s the real reason really I want to visit... to meet new people, meet new friends you know”. (Lamin, from Liberia).

The Peace Gardens, a highly maintained and attractive city centre garden, was identified as being a particularly good place for socialising, and is possibly the only place in Sheffield where refugee and non-refugee communities are seen to fully share a public recreational facility.

One of the reasons why the Peace Gardens is so successful in this respect is that it also meets the requirement of easy access. Participants felt that they were much more likely to visit city centre locations, as they are easy to find and near to their usual routes. In highly managed places such as these gardens and traditional parks participants found it easier to interpret acceptable behaviour. For example, pathways and places to sit were easily identifiable and participants were less worried that they might inadvertently do something wrong. These places also have park staff / wardens and it is probable that this also contributes to a sense of safety. As a result of these factors, participants could realistically imagine being able to go back to city centre or near-city centre, highly managed locations rather than other sites visited during the project.

Detachment - In many ways participants were detached from the public open spaces in their city and did not use them in the course of their daily lives. Their experience of Sheffield was highly focused on the city centre, and routes taken between home (often in city centre fringe locations), refugee orientated facilities, English classes, religious centres and shopping (fig.5). Before starting the Viewfinder course most had only visited the two city centre locations (Peace Gardens and Winter Gardens), and the only participant who appeared to regularly visit parks was Abdul due to his football activities. Group members had not visited the countryside except one member who had gone to the Peak District with a voluntary group that organises trips for refugees.



Figure 5: An everyday experience of open space, from Abdul's photo diary.

Apart from a couple of reported visits by one of the participants, this pattern of general non-use continued during and immediately after the 3 months of the Viewfinder project despite participants appearing to enjoy the group visits to parks and seeming interested in exploring the city in this way. Therefore, it is important to examine possible reasons why the participants chose not to independently visit parks and greenspaces.

Specific characteristics of different types of green spaces can act as a deterrent to re-visiting. Participants discussed aspects of safety as being of concern particularly in wooded areas or in places without many other visitors. However, their concerns did not seem to differ or be more strongly held than those likely to be expressed by non-refugee populations. One participant noted that dogs were considered dangerous in her own country, but now she has lived in the UK for two years she has got used to people walking dogs. We did not observe any specific fear of dogs from Muslim participants. Group members mentioned that they generally did not want to visit places when the weather is bad in winter or if they are alone, both for reasons of safety and enjoyment.

"I'm always willing to go there but I can't go alone. I'd rather go with somebody... you need someone to talk to... even if you have a pet it will look better, you know that when you are alone somebody will look, you fool, you crazy". (Lamin, from Liberia).

The lack of a social context for visiting parks hinders greater use of parks and greenspace by the participants. Memories of visiting parks or the countryside at home were always with family or friends. Participants enjoyed the collective nature of the Viewfinder visits and spoke about how enjoyable it was to walk and chat together. However, all but one of the participants lived alone and had come to the UK without any family members, and when talking about their free time participants rarely mentioned spending time with groups of friends. The ability to organise others and make a specific trip to visit a park is likely to require a high level of motivation and confidence and is a significant barrier for the participants to overcome.

During the project participants were asked about their use of open spaces (parks, 'near home' environments, countryside) in their home countries, and it was clear that for many of them the idea of specific areas of public amenity greenspace was not common except in large African cities. Visits to the countryside, or recreation in the countryside, were generally within the context of visiting relatives. The concept of recreation in parks, or visiting countryside-like areas for pleasure was alien to most of our participants. Though they seemed to accept it as a positive aspect of British culture, they did not necessarily share some of the more commonly held assumptions regarding motivations for visiting open space. Though they described visiting parks as a relaxing activity, they didn't articulate any health or exercise related reasons for informal recreation akin to the concept of 'stretching your legs'. They could not see why they would go to the countryside without having anyone to visit there, and did not comment on landscape views in general as being 'beautiful' (i.e. views into the Peak District). Occasionally they appeared to be confused about what adults should 'do' in parks, and didn't particularly value simply walking for the sake of it. It is important to note that this agenda is not equally shared by all British citizens, and indeed, the least keen 'walkers' in the group were the two photographic trainers who are Afro-Caribbean British.

The life situations of refugees are highly significant with regard to their pattern of low levels of visiting parks and green spaces. They have limited resources and their everyday priorities are basic needs. In conversations with the group members

about their weekends/weeks they often mentioned how busy they were, referring to English classes, shopping and appointments related to housing, job searching and their refugee status. However, alongside these themes were also expressions of boredom and how they feel there is little to do, expressing frustration with sitting at home alone watching television, and how it is difficult to find interesting things to do and to make friends.

Barriers to access appeared to be more related to the confidence and energy of travelling and exploring new places than specifically corresponding to distance or travel costs. However, both these issues were important, and participants found it hard to imagine visiting places that seemed ‘far away’ to them, such as the urban fringe locations, despite being given information about relatively low cost means of public transport. They found it easier to imagine revisiting places that we could describe as being close to local landmarks or places they often visited, such as the hospital or their church.

One specific aspect of the life situation of refugees which exacerbates their concerns of safety and lack of a social context is a worry of standing out or transgressing boundaries of acceptability. This related to being on one’s own, considered unusual not only in their home countries but also in Britain. Even the participant who was in the most secure situation legally (permanent right to remain in the UK) showed us papers to let us know that if he committed a crime he could be deported; this was obviously a cause of concern for him. The more ambiguous urban fringe countryside locations seemed to worry the participants most as they were unsure about the legalities of access and accepted behaviour.



Figure 6: A dry stone wall at Loxely Common.

“They have so much private land you know... sometimes I wouldn’t know the land demarcation line, sometimes maybe I will just jump into the farm where I am not supposed to go” (Lamin, from Liberia; Fig.6).

The Viewfinder visits largely overcame these fears as sites were visited in groups, transport was arranged, and the researchers were there to give advice regarding usual use of the places. However, though increased familiarity with parks seemed to increase the participant’s motivation for visiting greenspaces and raise awareness of opportunities for this type of recreation in Sheffield, it did not materially change their current life situation or their ability to organise and make journeys to non city-centre locations.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The experience of the Viewfinder Project clearly highlights the role that public open space can play in providing refugees and asylum seekers with positive experiences of life in the UK. Visiting parks, gardens and urban fringe countryside proved to be a stimulating and enjoyable contrast to many of the participants’ everyday routines, and seemed to give them a glimpse of pleasurable aspects of life in the city. For refugees who settle long term in their adopted countries, a sense that the new lifestyle can be rewarding and beneficial to them is vital in

enabling them to accept their change of circumstances (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury, 2003). This research supports the notion that a positive impression of the local environment, and participation in its leisure opportunities, can be a useful component of building this acceptance. Visiting a range of types of urban greenspace and participating in different activities gave participants an insight into British culture and a growing awareness of recreational norms. Though overcoming barriers to full participation occurs only over time - through building of confidence, friendship networks and economic stability – occasional or frequent use of public open space can aid integration with non-refugee communities. This can be through shared sporting, recreational or entertainment facilities. The free-of-charge and easy-to-find nature of these is vital.

The role of the physical environment in culture shock has seldom been addressed in research, though there are common narratives in literature on immigrant experiences that relate how arrival in the UK can be seen as disorientating and bleak¹. Many refugees lack confidence to explore a confusing and alien cityscape, which differs in so many respects to their homeland. Within this context of distancing themselves from their environment, the participants on Viewfinder expressed particular surprise and delight when recognising aspects of their home countries in the open spaces visiting during the project. Landscape types that are conceived in the UK as ‘typically British’ may also be seen as ‘home-like’ to immigrants. It is important, therefore, not to stereotype landscape features or types as emblematic of one particular culture, and to be open to unexpected resonances.

The familiarity of specific plants, nuances of landscape and vegetation types and previous experience of activities provided the participants with glimpses of normality. This ‘backwards view’ was not merely a pleasant nostalgia; indeed, memories of home for people caught in forced migration are complex. Some participants expressed these familiarities as a means of providing them with a conceptual link between their homeland and their life in the UK. They suggested that they made them feel proud to be African, and that it could help them remember and show their friends what their homeland is like. It also provided them with a situation where they were knowledgeable and in a position to share that knowledge. At best, this built confidence in their ability to be accepted and

contribute to British society. Recognition and familiarity in landscape appears to help migrants conceptualise their position in the new society, a line of enquiry that would benefit from further research.

Several aspects of urban green space were particularly important for this participant group and there is much that green space providers and refugee support agencies could do to maximise the benefit of existing green spaces for refugee populations. The diversity of provision and free access are crucial, and the accessibility and cosmopolitan nature of city centre spaces is particularly important. World plant collections, of which there are two excellent examples in Sheffield, can stimulate links between the homeland and the new country. Urban green space can also provide great social opportunities for new residents of a city and newly arrived refugees in the UK would benefit from information about the existence of parks, the cultural idea of parks, and the opportunities that they offer.

Parks and green spaces are integral and (often) delightful components of the urban public realm. By recognising and enhancing the qualities of these, and by encouraging meaningful participation for all, it is possible to raise the quality of life for all urban dwellers. Ensuring access to enjoyable, healthy and restorative environments can be especially beneficial for sectors of the population who are otherwise limited in their recreational choices, such as asylum seekers and refugees.

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FOOTNOTES

1. “In the UK an asylum seeker means someone who has made a formal application for asylum, and are awaiting a decision about their status. If their application is accepted, they become a refugee. A refugee is a person who has been granted permission to stay in the UK under the terms of the 1951 Refugee Convention because of a well-founded fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a social group”.
2. A pseudonym has been used for TIV

3. The duration of the course allowed for continued discussion and informed consent regarding the use of quotes and photographs both in the exhibition and research publications.

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Publication 2

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Engaging with marginalized groups in Public Open Space research: the potential of collaboration and combined methods

Nissa Finney and Clare Rishbeth

Abstract

This paper discusses methodological dilemmas that were encountered, and strategies used to overcome them, in the Viewfinder project that was undertaken in 2004 in Sheffield, UK. The project investigated refugees' perceptions and experiences of urban Public Open Space in Britain. Through partnership with a 12 week, accredited photography training course and visits to public open spaces, the research combined visual, experiential, participatory and longitudinal approaches. This paper discusses the success of these in relation to three aims: 1. Generating a research situation of open communication; 2. Collaborating with non-academic partners; 3. Creating mutual benefit. The research identifies methodological techniques that have potential for engaging marginalised groups in landscape and planning research and in consultation practice.

Introduction

The Viewfinder project was undertaken in Sheffield, UK in 2004 and investigated immigrants' perceptions and experiences of urban Public Open Space (POS) in Britain. The research aimed both to obtain empirical results and to explore the application of appropriate methodologies within an under-researched setting. More specifically, we hoped to create a research environment that would allow a marginalized sector of the population to engage openly and honestly with the research.

Several qualitative approaches were innovatively combined in this project, namely visual methods (through photography training), site visits, participation and longitudinal fieldwork. This paper lays out the rationale for this methodology and then critiques it in relation to three of the project's aims: 1. To generate a research situation of open communication; 2. To collaborate with non-academic partners; 3. To create a mutually beneficial research situation. We illustrate how a flexible approach and a willingness to relinquish full control of the research situation enabled us to obtain rich and valid research material. The paper concludes by highlighting aspects of the methodological approach that have the potential to be developed as creative and successful ways of engaging with marginalized groups in landscape and planning research, and that have implications for consultation practice.

Context – the research project

Research aims and importance

The potential of Public Open Space (POS) to provide benefits for urban residents has been well documented and is receiving increasing attention within government policy in the UK (CABESpace, 2004; ODPM, 2002). In the planning, design and management of urban greenspace, professionals aim to respond to the needs and desires of a diverse population. However, some sectors of society have received little attention within academic research, leading to a paucity of guidance within the professional sphere. The research project presented in this paper received funding from the Economic and Social Research Council to investigate perceptions and experiences of urban POS by immigrant communities. (Later in the course of the project development this was re-focused as specifically asylum seeker and refugee participants).

One issue addressed by this research was 'non-use' of POS, especially with regard to aspects of cultural and ethnic identity (Gold, 1972, Burgess et al, 1988, Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995) and for newly arrived and comparatively isolated immigrants. We aimed to understand the potential for use of local greenspace to provide a restorative experience, and the need to contextualise the cultural understandings of both leisure and greenspace through participants' personal

histories. Research in the area of landscape studies has demonstrated the importance and richness of childhood memories in the detail and character of landscape appreciation (Marcus, 1978, Ward-Thompson, 2004). However, these studies mostly focus on situations where adult and childhood experiences are in similar locations. What meaning do these earlier experiences have in entirely different contexts; do they motivate engagement or does the difference exacerbate barriers to use? We were interested in the role of homeland memories in setting expectations and patterns of use, and how participants could recognise or re-negotiate their idea of 'normal' open space within the culture shock of adjusting to a very different environment. This can crucially contribute to understandings of the environmental factor in the settlement process among new migrants. From a planning perspective, it gives an insight into the potential of POS to contribute to positive feelings of locality among 'new-locals'.

Methodology and its rationale

In devising the methodology we worked at the boundary areas of traditional qualitative research methods, and adapted techniques from planning and design participatory practice. We would support Sandercock's assertion of the shared benefits of creative approaches in research, pedagogy and practice (Sandercock, 2003). Our personal backgrounds combine multiple roles: social science researcher, refugee support volunteer, teacher of design studios, community landscape architect. We wanted to explore the benefits of combining our expertise from these different arenas, and to question how, in turn, this could be presented for reflection and adaptation within academia and practice. This paper describes research-focused methodologies, in which the primary aim was to produce empirical research findings. However, we hope that the techniques and approaches used to investigate these issues can critically inform the debate on meaningful consultation and research practice with culturally diverse groups (Beebeejaun, 2004; Thompson, 2003).

The project aimed to pilot an innovative methodology within a social science research context that would enable us to investigate the area of landscape perception and use, and to work sensitively with this particular participant group. The ability of people to meaningfully represent their experiences of place can be

diminished by rushed or simplistic methods in both research and planning practice. In particular, marginalised groups such as asylum seekers and refugees, are seldom given the chance to voice their experiences of their environment due to multiple factors of mainstream disengagement; social, linguistic, spatial and educational (ODPM, 2004; Block, 2000; Olufemi and Reeves, 2004).

Key characteristics that defined our approach to the project were use of visual and on-site methods, and a commitment to informed participation and shared benefit with participants. In setting out these principles and practices, it is important to recognise both parallels and differences with other forms of people / place enquiry. Below we briefly contextualise our project within associated fields, looking at common inspiration and identifying where objectives may differ.

Research and public consultation about the use and perception of open spaces, somewhat surprisingly, has predominantly been conducted in places and situations removed from these open spaces. The absence of experiential methods is notable. This encourages generalised accounts of user experience, possibly filtered (consciously or sub-consciously) to comply with perceptions of what the researcher is interested in, rather than specific responses and reactions that capture details of micro-climate, noise, impressions of other park users, physical effort taken to move around the site and so on. Research that has been conducted ‘on-site’, with the exception of a few studies (e.g. Burgess, 1995), tends to employ observational surveys of users or short questionnaires, both of which lead to quantitative overviews, limited in their exploration of the issue (e.g. Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995; Hutchinson, 1987). Though in recent years there has been an increase in situated consultation events (see for example, ‘Planning for Real’ and derivatives of this²), these tend to elicit input from regular site users who are in the location or have visited for this purpose. Without significant adaptation, these research and consultative methods are unsuitable to use with a participant group such as this one, who are often ‘non-users’ of most POS in the city, limited in their English ability and distrustful of answering questions from strangers. By combining photography training and research with regular visits to urban POS, the Viewfinder project aimed to engage this marginalised group.

In collaboration with a community-based media training organisation, we developed a twelve week programme that would combine a free Open College Network accredited basic photography course with research into perceptions and experiences of urban green spaces. The course was intended to develop the visual communication skills of the participants, giving them a personal benefit from being involved as well as empowering them to contribute more fully to the research. The collaboration also created a situation rich in knowledge from the different partners that could be shared for the benefit of all. Providing a photography course also overcame traditional difficulties of recruiting research participants from immigrant communities (Bloch, 1999; Flowerdew and Martin, 1997) and provided a vehicle for participation in the research. Some participants saw it as a way of developing career prospects: *“I don’t know how I’m gonna do but I’ll still continue my photography you know. Because I don’t want to do a hard job you know, I like photography.”* (Lamin, Liberia). The longitudinal nature of the project crucially gave time for skills and relationships to develop as well as for group visits to a number of different green spaces.

This context of combined methods and collaboration with photography training over a three month period enabled us to develop a participatory and inclusive ethos for Viewfinder. In the area of planning practice, participatory methods have grown in influence and expanded in remit in the last few decades (New Economics Forum, 1998). The role of the traditional planning meeting as a consultation model is recognised as only partial to any broad participatory strategy, and more innovative processes (often multi-modal and longitudinal) are gaining credence in this area. Texts such as Hester’s ‘Community design primer’ (1990) and The Community Planning Handbook (Watts, 2000), and the model of community consultation facilitators such as the Neighbourhood Initiative Foundation have encouraged planners to engage creatively with communities; to use playful approaches which facilitate collaborative effort and embrace contradictory and ambiguous responses. Visual and arts techniques, from taking of photos of a locality using disposable cameras to full scale public performances, have been shown to contribute to the sharing of stories and revealing of underlying conflicts (Sarkissian and Walsh, 1997; Sarkissian, 2005). Sandercock (2003) argues for the importance of storytelling (verbal and non-verbal) as a means of revealing

“questions of belonging and identity and difference”, especially in the context of multicultural urban life (p22). In terms of stimulating stories and discussion, the Viewfinder project used a similar portfolio of facilitation techniques to encourage honest and reflective discussion, and participation in the project. However, use of this material in a research situation attempts a reflective investigation into questions and theories, whereas in a planning context it additionally informs an agenda for physical or organisational change.

Current participatory practice aims towards ‘community capacity building’ as a key outcome of a participatory planning process. This emphasises opportunities for people to learn through experience, and for this to contribute to a collective effort so that the community as a whole gains confidence in their skills and their ability to contribute to public decisions (Home Office, 2004). In this objective, the Viewfinder project would situate itself differently from planning practice. Involvement in the photography aspect of the project did lead to an accredited qualification. However, we were not working with a ‘community’ (whether described by locality or shared interest) and the skills learnt were seen as being purely of personal benefit. Though we aimed to address the power relations of traditional researcher / researched relationships, the project did not have a remit of empowerment on any scale other than mutual contribution and benefit from the research.

Another model of a project which draws on similar principles to Viewfinder is Participatory Action Research. Collaborative and participatory approaches to research have been developed predominantly within medical/health and education settings as part of the broad ‘family’ of action research (Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Day et al, 2002). Action Research combines research enquiry with an agenda for change within a specific situation, for example, implementation of a policy or project. The researcher has an activist stance within the project context; crucially linking academic practice with real-world interaction (Reardon, 2003). This particular project essentially used participatory techniques to facilitate involvement in the research and share personal benefit, rather than to enact a wider transformation.

A participatory practice that has several characteristics in common with the Viewfinder project is PhotoVoice. This technique was developed from a background of anthropological academic research and photo-journalism. Participants are given training in the use of cameras and document their own lives to produce a collective exhibition. This documentation can be used, usually in exhibition form, to influence a wider political or social concern. A primary purpose is to give a creative ‘voice’ to people otherwise marginalised from mainstream communication, and has been used in the context of empowering social projects (Photovoice, 2003) and for action research purposes (McIntyre, 2003; Wang and Burris, 1997). In her work on the meanings of place and community among women in Belfast, McIntyre developed a photography project as non-verbal form of storytelling. In this project “[the] camera provided resources enabling the women to tell ‘visual stories’ about themselves, thus creating opportunities for them to express themselves in their own images, words and reflections. In turn, these images became points of entry into seeing beneath surface issues, relationships, community events, and the extent to which place informs identity.” (McIntyre, 2003, p48). There are many similarities between PhotoVoice and the Viewfinder methodology in technique and intent, specifically in the desire to raise photographic skills in order to encourage expressive communication. However, most PhotoVoice projects appear to give greater priority to self-expression and reflection than was the case in Viewfinder, in which the focus was directed on experience of urban POS.

Within academic disciplines, visual methods are integral to many forms of social anthropology. This spans a wider range of practices from documentation, representational analysis and participatory techniques (Pink, 2001; Pink, 2004) and a Visual Anthropology Network is increasingly influencing and integrating with ‘mainstream’ anthropology. Some of the techniques, such as photo-elicitation, are common to other disciplines such as sociology and environmental psychology (Banks, 2001). Visual anthropology would assert a specifically people-centric approach, where visual methods are part of wider ethnographic projects (Pink, 2004, p.2).

There is a tradition in work on landscape preference of using visual stimuli (Porteous, 1996). However, this tends to involve assessing participants' reactions to images rather than allowing them to be pro-active in producing or creating images and engaging with the medium (e.g. Zube and Pitt, 1981; Nasar, 1984). Participant photographs which then may be discussed or simply assessed by quantitative methods is a fairly common means of research enquiry (Dodman, 2003; Stewart et al., 2004). The method of photo diaries has become more common in recent years, giving the participant the power over the subject matter and, usually, the resultant topics of discussion (Banks, 2001). However, it is rare for participants to have the visual or photography skills to move beyond the expression of simple subject matter to communicate their individual perspectives, and the diaries / photographs provide only a snapshot of a particular day or week. We were concerned with equipping our group to visually communicate the complexities and emotional depth of their experiences.

In situating the Viewfinder project within these various disciplines and practice approaches, we re-iterate that the participatory objectives of this research project are distinct from the broader social agenda of a practice planning project. Participatory and collaborative approaches used by academics seek to advance ethical debates about power relations in research contexts and the outputs and effects of research. It was important to us that we represented our values of social constructionism and non-essentialism (Kobayashi, 2001); of trying to respect and work with difference, and address the balance of power relations in traditional research (Skelton, 2001). The Viewfinder project was designed in this spirit, with the aim of promoting more integrated roles, breaking down traditional barriers of hierarchy and decision making, and making academic research less exclusive. We thereby recognise the value of different types of knowledge and experience (Reason and Bradbury, 2001).

Participants and partners

The participant group comprised five men and one woman, all asylum seekers or refugees, who had been in the UK (and in Sheffield) for between two months and two and a half years. Their ages ranged from 17 to 45 and they came from Afghanistan, Somalia, Rwanda, Liberia and Zimbabwe. Some had refugee status

(right to remain permanently in the UK), others had humanitarian protection status (with permission to remain in the UK for a fixed period, usually up to three years), and one was in the process of appealing against a refusal of his asylum application. Two worked part-time, one undertook voluntary work and the others were unemployed. They were all studying English. With the exception of the youngest participant they were all separated from all members of their family. Only one participant had been educated at post-school level and two had never attended school in their home country. Their English abilities ranged from very basic to fluent.

As asylum seekers and recently-arrived refugees, the participants were marginalised and living on the peripheries of British society. This was clear from their conversations about their lives in Britain and the focus of their concerns being housing, money and their asylum applications; and their spheres of contact being almost entirely within the refugee sector (e.g. housing providers, case workers, other asylum seekers and refugees). This affected their perceptions of and responses to the sites we visited but also had methodological implications. For example, some were not in tune with mainstream British culture of timekeeping and attendance. It also affected participation in the research because the participants clearly did not see themselves in positions of power or authority and therefore did not easily engage in the decision making processes. In one interesting conversation, a refugee participant from Liberia described himself, without any prompting, as a 'second class citizen' because he lived with the possibility of being deported.

Our partners in facilitating the Viewfinder course were TIV¹, a community training organisation based in Sheffield. They have been working for ten years with minority ethnic communities in the city, providing training and services in video and film. They are based at a centre in a central location that houses several other voluntary, charity and non-governmental sector organisations supporting minority communities. During the period of our collaboration and since, they had no core funding and relied instead on specific project grants, commissions and volunteers. There were six staff, all in non-salaried positions, though we worked closely with two individuals. The staff and the organisation were rooted in

African-Jamaican culture and had particularly strong links with this community in Sheffield. The working culture in which they operate was one of uncertainty, primarily in terms of funds, and they were continuously concerned with ensuring the continuation of their organisation. Within the context of the Viewfinder project they took responsibility for providing the photographic training and the related facilities and resources.

Methods used

The Viewfinder group of asylum seekers and refugees met every Thursday afternoon for three months from May to July 2004 and an informal, supportive and friendly atmosphere quickly developed. On seven of the twelve sessions, plus two Saturdays, we visited a park or green space in Sheffield. A range of different types of parks were visited, located around the city, including formal gardens, semi-natural woodland, the city farm and festivals in parks. We travelled by minibus and the group members were given information about the site including a map and details about public transport. On site, the group explored and took photographs to record and express their experiences (Fig 1). Each site visit was followed by feedback interviews and workshops at the beginning of the following week's session.



Fig 1. *Participants learning how to use their cameras.*

Use of the photography was based around the methodology of participant-led photo-elicitation. Theoretical understandings of this technique represent the choice of objects and views photographed by a participant as demonstrative of their values and preferences (Harper, 2002). However, it is important to recognise that cultural conventions in photography (for example, taking photos of friends, arranging photos of self in prestigious locations, taking photos of extensive views) may influence choice of subject. We found that varying the photographic tasks and types of reflective activities encouraged participants to use photography in less conventional ways, maintained interest in the research throughout the project and opened up new areas for discussion.

Activities were developed on a week by week basis depending on the nature of the site visit, numbers of participants attending, weather and special events. The most common method used was free choice photos during the site visit, followed by individual interviews discussing the photographs the following week. On a couple of occasions, participants were given specific photographic tasks such as taking photos in the park that illustrated their perceptions of 'beautiful', 'play', 'relax' and 'worry', of undertaking a 'photo-diary' of their weekly routes and of taking photos on the theme of 'streetscape' to submit to a BBC website competition. Although the selection of these activities was undoubtedly subject to researcher bias, these tasks provided a springboard for discussion that compared the perceptions and experiences of the members of the group, including the researchers.

As participants became more comfortable and confident within the group we found it productive to facilitate group discussions. In developing these reflective exercises we found we were often adapting techniques used in educational and planning participation contexts. We devised a range of interactive activities, such as the making of 'postcards' of their visit by sticking together photographs and writing on the back. We produced a collage of one visit to prompt discussion, asked participants to arrange issues in order of importance, and once used drawing as a means of talking about activities in parks. Employing an educational model of individual work that collectively informs group discussions gave participants confidence in their contributions and in expression of different opinions.

From fieldwork to findings

The combination of visual, participatory, longitudinal and experiential methods that were used in the Viewfinder project provided us with rich and diverse research material. This included photographs, interview transcripts, site observations and material from group activities. The longitudinal and experimental nature of the project allowed us to feed emerging findings into on-going discussions with participants and partners, providing a useful reflective loop. In this way, analysis and theory formulation was a continuous process and our understandings of the participants' perspectives and experiences of Public Open Space gradually gained depth and detail.

What distinguishes the methodology of this project in particular from previous research into experience of POS is, firstly, that it was designed to work with newcomers, or 'outsiders' to POS in Britain; and secondly, that it combined methods that allowed for both immediate, in-the-field responses to POS and reflections on the visits in the context of group relationships established over a three month period. This holistic, in-depth approach illuminated complexities in experience and perception that may have otherwise been overlooked or misunderstood.



Fig 2. *Lamin in the horticultural greenhouse at Heeley City Farm (self-pose).*

For example, Figure 2 shows Lamin, a group member from Liberia, now a refugee living in Sheffield, amongst hanging baskets at Heeley City Farm. Understanding both the context and consequences of this photograph are crucial to understanding Lamin's experiences of this neighbourhood greenspace.

Lamin requested that this photograph was taken of him and carefully positioned himself amongst the colourful flowers. Two particularly interesting points can be made here. Firstly, this act reflects a cultural convention and desire to be photographed, in this case in a place considered to be beautiful. Knowing this helps us to understand the way Lamin photographed the greenspaces we visited. Secondly, Lamin's immediate expressions of the novelty, beauty and Britishness of the scene, and his later reflections on the visit to the community farm, gave us understanding of his ideas about beauty, Britain, his own identity, the purposes of POS and his ambitions. He saw the farm as somewhere where he could get involved: *"I would go there, there is something to do, some volunteering for one or two hours, I can do it"*. Lamin also told us about his Grandfather's farm, and that one day, when he has a house, he would like to hang one of these beautiful baskets of flowers on its wall.



Fig 3 *Firmina's photo of walking through the Rivelin Valley.*

Similarly, Firmina's photograph of the Rivelin Valley cannot be categorised simplistically. (Figure 3). The taking of the photograph, together with her behaviour in the Valley, such as playing in the stream and watching the ducks, and

the photograph-initiated individual and group discussions, told us about Firmina's feelings about of peace and relaxation in this place: *"Yeah, Rivelin Valley! I really liked it! Especially summer time, it's very, very relaxing, walking with people, talking each other, your private life like that you know, it's really nice"*.

Discussions also revealed her need for company on such visits, and connections with childhood memories of playing in woods and rocks.

The cumulative collection of images and other material and the ongoing reflection on them generated a number of key research themes (Davies, 1999). We found memory and nostalgia to be very important in participants' experiences; and this was combined with cultural surprise and the novelty of visiting new forms of urban greenspace. Though participants had strong positive experiences of the site visits, this seldom translated into increased independent visits during the four month period of contact. Sustained engagement only occurred when participants could envisage a personal benefit, such as opportunities to socialise, play sport and enjoy plants. These possibilities only became realistic when physical and psychological barriers were overcome; most usually in the case of busy city centre sites. Factors which caused detachment could be the result of site characteristics - especially safety and illegibility - and individual's life situations. Often participants did not have the confidence to explore new places independently, and the lack of social contexts for visiting green spaces was key in limiting use (Rishbeth and Finney, forthcoming).

We were keen for the findings and experiences of Viewfinder to be widely and imaginatively disseminated to reflect the inclusive nature of the project. In addition to academic papers and presentations, we have written for refugee sector and landscape architecture practitioner magazines and had local media coverage. The major public dissemination of the project was an exhibition combining photographs with research themes and this was shown at a park festival during Refugee Week in June, 2004, the Black Film Festival in Sheffield in August, 2004, the Open Space conference in Edinburgh in October, 2004, The Showroom Cinema, Sheffield in November, 2004 and community centres and local libraries in Sheffield in December, 2004 and January, 2005.

Putting theory into practice

By using the methodologies outlined above we aimed to overcome, as far as possible, the barriers to honest communication between researchers and research participants. Many of these barriers are common to all social research situations: the need to reduce respondent bias, to build trust and ensure reliable results (Robson, 2002). Due to the nature of our participant group, these issues needed explicit strategies to address potential methodological weaknesses; strategies we found we had to evolve and re-assess throughout the duration of the research. In this sense it was ‘risky research’, requiring particular sensitivity and a flexible response to evolving methodologies. In telling this story, we echo the sentiment expressed by Leyshon (2002, p179): “As authors and readers know, the image of research progressing in a smooth and uncomplicated fashion is largely illusory, yet often necessary to the credibility of the paper. Tales of failure or complications are often absent from the literature because authors do not wish to acknowledge disappointment and in part as these experiences are not usually welcomed in academic journals”. Below we reflect critically on the success and limitations of the methods we developed in addressing these issues.

Generating open communication

The recent arrival in Sheffield (and the UK) of most of the participants meant that they had been through traumatic experiences in the recent past and this required a sensitivity to their situations that sometimes precluded open conversation about their personal histories and lives. The everyday lives of the participants could be quite chaotic. During Viewfinder, for example, one participant was in the process, with the help of the Government, of being reunited with his mother who he had not seen for ten years. This resulted in her visiting England for a short time, a momentous occasion for our participant who, understandably, was somewhat preoccupied with this event. The participants’ recent arrivals in the UK also meant that they had little orientation of the city or experience of visiting parks. This affected the research in that our visits were ‘first impressions’ rather than everyday experiences. It also meant that the English language abilities of the group varied greatly with two participants speaking very limited English.

Using photography to some extent overcame language barriers. It provided a focus for conversation and a stimulus for discussion and group members could draw on their own and each other's images to illustrate the points they wished to make. Care needed to be taken to ensure that the participant, not the researcher, was responsible for interpreting the significance of the photographic choice. However, there is a limit to the extent to which visual methods can replace verbal ones and our discussions with participants with only basic English language skills were undoubtedly less in-depth and insightful than with the others. Participants varied in their ability to verbalise their motivations for taking individual photographs, and in the nuance of their interpretations of place. We found that the interview discussions on occasions became restricted and repetitious, a situation that became frustrating for both researcher and participant. This led us to diversify the methods of reflective discussion, reducing the number of individual interviews and introducing more group activities. We were able to facilitate these in such a way that all participants voiced opinions to some extent, and the supportive presence and attitude of group members encouraged those with fewer English skills to contribute.

We made a deliberate decision not to introduce interpreters into Viewfinder. This was primarily because of a desire to treat all participants equally and to create power relations that were as balanced as possible between all members of the group. The introduction of new group members would also have disrupted the rapport that we had established. However, we did conduct interviews with group members one month after the photography course had finished and in some of these we employed interpreters. This was extremely useful in clarifying information that we had gathered throughout the main fieldwork period. It also emerged as being an important opportunity for participants to feed back to us about the project and to ask us questions.

We had aimed for group members to be active participants in the process of interpreting their own experiences and identifying themes and stories that they wanted voiced (McIntyre, 2003). In the launch event and in subsequent sessions we had deliberately shown examples of similar research and included visually based activities that introduced the research themes. We defined our role as researchers

at all sessions. (These were obviously essential aspects of our ethical requirement for informed consent). In the initial planning for the Viewfinder sessions we had allocated significant time towards the end of the project in order for the group to work together on material for the exhibition. As the project progressed it became clear that this well-intentioned ambition was unrealistic with this participant group. Their backgrounds were entirely removed from any context of higher education, and their experiences of life had not brought them into any previous contact with research, research findings or researchers. As such, we suspect that they generally had very little understanding of our professional aims. This cultural divide, coupled with the varying standards of English, meant that as a group they had little inclination or learned ability to collate and order this kind of information, and their participation in the full scope of the project was more limited than we had anticipated. Nevertheless, the methodologies employed did support some direction of the research process by individuals: choice of engaging in different activities on site, subjects for photography, personal information volunteered and some control of the direction of discussion topics.

In many research situations, respondents enjoy the chance to actively engage with research, and the reflective opportunities provided by interviews and focus groups (Robson, 2002). However, our experience in this project suggests that for this contribution to move beyond immediate responses to a more considered evaluation of research themes, there needs to be a basic cultural understanding of the nature of research activity. We tentatively suggest that this may also be the case with other participant groups which are similarly removed from academic experience; for example young children or people with particular learning disabilities. This is not to imply that the validity and importance of their immediate responses is in any way diminished, and it is certainly an area that would benefit from further enquiry.

The shared experience between participants and researchers of on-site visits was vital to our research, and was a highly successful aspect of the methodology. These situations provided a relaxed environment where participants chatted with researchers informally both regarding their immediate impressions of the visit and about general aspects of their life. In participating together in admiring views, negotiating stepping stones, feeding ducks and playing on the swings, we were

able to achieve an informality and sense of shared humanity that diminished the differences of our culture, status, age or gender (Fig 4). These times often gave rise to the richest stories and observations by participants. Especially in the woodland and heathland locations, a number of participants volunteered recollections of their homeland.



Fig 4. *Researcher record of on-site exploration.*

“It remind me a lot my country because my country there are lots of big rocks...in my country they’re bigger than this,... they are very, very big and people they used to climb them you know, go up them then sit up on them” (Firmina, from Rwanda).

“Some rocks in the park also reminded me of Afghanistan...I used to go climbing. Especially in the village where we used to go at weekends, it was in the foothills of the mountains and we would go climbing.” (Mansoor, from Afghanistan).

We were also able to observe how participants behaved in the different types of Public Open Space. The visits were guided by the researchers, though participants tended to control the pace and length of time spent at individual features. There are obvious limitations in comparing a group visit to how a participant might act if visiting independently, but it was possible to observe which aspects of the places engaged and delighted participants, and which proved to be uninteresting. Making any recordings on site would have been counter-productive to the development of rapport and trust. Therefore, our research practice was to discuss our on-site

experiences and conversations together immediately after the visit, and afterwards write up our observations as fully as possible.

The longitudinal nature of the research was crucial to the project's success. It allowed us to gently gather information and build mutual understandings. The participants were motivated to remain involved for 12 weeks because of the establishment of relationships and enjoyable routine. There are, of course, resource and time implications. The three month period required a high level of commitment from all partners and participants and necessitated a thoughtful exit strategy (Leyshon, 2002). Though the regular training sessions came to a formal end in August 2004, participants seemed to appreciate us making arrangements to meet with them for individual interviews a month later, and the exhibition launch in the cinema in November 2004 provided a future date to anticipate. TIV were also able to give information about further training courses open to participants. It is rare for research projects to be able to 'request' this frequency and length of contact with participants, and this privileged position was only possible due to the provision of a training course.

In summary, the combination of visual, longitudinal and experiential methods that we employed overcame linguistic, cultural and social barriers in the Viewfinder group, thereby enabling us to develop in-depth understandings of perceptions and experiences of public open spaces. This methodology was made possible through a collaboration that linked the research to a photography training course. However, this partnership was not without challenges.

Challenges of collaboration

This research was collaborative in the sense that there was an organisational partnership between the researchers (the University) and TIV. Contact was made with TIV through a mutual acquaintance and although the initial idea for the project came from us, their input was instrumental in the development of the project and making the ideas a reality. The collaboration was intended to be mutually beneficial: TIV would benefit from the knowledge, resources and prestige of working with the University; we would benefit from the knowledge, skills and contacts of TIV. By providing a training course, we aimed to share the

benefit of the research situation with participants, thereby making it less exploitative, and to secure a setting for longitudinal research.

Authors advise that expectations, rules, roles and procedures should be clearly defined at the beginning of a collaboration (White et al, 2004). In the early stages of Viewfinder it was agreed that TIV would take responsibility for the photography training including recruitment, teaching, course materials and equipment, accreditation and certification, and funding. We would take responsibility for the site visits, leading reflective practice and for exhibitions and dissemination of the project. It was envisaged that joint responsibility would be taken for the planning of the sessions. This split of responsibilities was formalised by us each applying for funding to cover the costs of our relevant aspects of the project.

We also took a number of conscious steps to set ourselves up as equals to TIV and to dispel the myth of the University and its researchers as detached from 'real' people and 'real' life. Savvakis and Tzanakis (2004) have argued that the way the researcher enters the field of enquiry and how s/he is received can affect the 'results' of the research. Their case studies illustrate, for example, how the perceived 'professional' status of the researchers lent a negative bias to the research whereas the common geographical origin of the researcher and the participants led to positive bias in the research situation. Our attempts at 'staging ourselves' (de Laine, 2000) were centred around downplaying the traditional powerful position of the University. For example, the project was located at our partner's premises and we had 'gone into' the photography training context of TIV and had largely been accepted into it. We had to quickly learn to adapt to TIV's working cultures and attitudes which were very different from those we were used to in the University primarily because of the constant financial insecurity of the organisation and its staff. By adapting our expectations and approach we were able to maintain a harmonious and productive working relationship.

However, two key issues regarding collaboration with a partner external to academia emerged during the project. These had significant implications for the research and required us to respond creatively and flexibly and also be prepared to

release control over some aspects of the research situation. As noted by Robson (2002, p.216), “[i]f notions of collaboration and participation are taken seriously, then some power of decision about aspects of the design and data collection are lost to the researcher. This may well be a price worth paying”.

The first key issue was changes to the plans for funding and resourcing of the project. This challenge became evident in the early stages and continued throughout. It resulted from TIV not managing to secure funding for the elements of the project for which they were responsible. This created an atmosphere of uncertainty that became characteristic of the context for project management and required adaptations to be made on a daily and weekly basis. For example, there were occasions when transport and refreshments had to be provided for the group by TIV yet firm arrangements could not be made as a result of funding uncertainties. This necessitated back up plans to be put in place but, more crucially, it required us to place trust and control of the situation with TIV. Although we could have intervened, financially and otherwise, it was important for us to respect alternative methods of dealing with difficult situations and to relinquish this control. TIV did, on the whole, address the problems raised by funding limitations, and presented us with new ways to deal with such situations.

The most significant way in which the changes to funding arrangements affected the research project, however, was in the recruitment of the participant group. TIV originally applied for funding from a regional regeneration fund and this application was unsuccessful. Less than two months before the Viewfinder start date they managed to secure some basic underwriting for the project from the Refugee Housing Association, and as a result we committed to enrolling asylum seekers and refugees in the project. The original research design had specified a broader group of immigrants. Working with refugee and asylum seekers participants had several implications. Firstly, they were recently arrived immigrants and therefore had limited knowledge of Sheffield and its Public Open Spaces and, in most cases, of the English language. Secondly, they were living in situations of uncertainty financially, socially and culturally and had suffered, in the relatively recent past, traumatic experiences. This had implications for trust building within the group and for practicalities of attendance, timekeeping and

travel. It was necessary for us to design the Viewfinder sessions with sensitivity to the participants' situations. This resulted in more in-depth work with a smaller group than originally anticipated and more visits to Public Open Spaces.

The second key issue of collaboration that had implications for the research was the provision of training. The combination of training and research was the most innovative, and therefore most risky, element of the research design. It required us to hand over control of a crucial element of the project to our partners and therefore, be prepared to adapt our expectations. The photography training provided by TIV was more basic and less structured than we had envisaged. This meant that the participants' photography skills did not allow them to express their experiences of POS through photography with the subtleties that we hoped they would develop. Nevertheless, photography proved a fruitful and enjoyable medium for exploring the sites. In addition, the less rigorous demands of the training gave us more time and space to undertake creative research activities and make visits to a greater number and variety of Public Open Spaces.

The different concepts of photography training provision and the purpose of the training led to tensions within the group as we attempted to balance our responsibilities to the participants with maintaining a partnership with TIV. We were deeply concerned about the photography training and feared that participants would be unhappy with the situation and feel they were not receiving 'due payment' for their commitment. Though we did not at any point provide training for participants, in TIV taking a lesser role we emerged as *de facto* course leaders. In offering participants access to our knowledge, such as about Sheffield or the asylum system, and in making extra efforts to keep the sessions interesting, we were undoubtedly trying to compensate for our perceptions of the inadequacies of the training (de Laine, 2000).

In his account of a research project with teenagers in rural areas, Leyshon (2002) reflected on the occasional incompatibility of research rigour and ethical considerations, and suggested that these dilemmas can be "addressed, if not overcome"(p.179). By being flexible in our research design and expectations and being prepared to relinquish control in some aspects of the research situation we

were able to turn difficulties into opportunities for valuable research material and insights. However, the collaboration with TIV was, at times, a stressful experience with many tensions. In this regard it was immensely valuable working as a pair of researchers, and reflecting on the research process became an inherent part of our working relationship. We met formally and informally almost on a daily basis to discuss the project and after the weekly fieldwork sessions we spent some time debriefing. This became an invaluable method of negotiating our frustrations and anxieties and trying to develop coping strategies and solutions. This reflexive process focused our thoughts on how our positions and preconceptions were affecting the project and the situated knowledge we were producing (Rose, 1997; Kobayashi, 2001).

Ideally, collaborative partnerships 'are based on mutual trust and respect, so that members can communicate openly. Ultimately, the goal of such relationships is to develop a non-hierarchical partnership that acknowledges the strengths and perspectives of all the parties' (White et al 2004: S5). In this way an intersect is created between the 'lived worlds' (Habermas, 1987, quoted in Savvakis and Tzanakis, 2004) of all those involved in which fresh power relations can be established. Although we did work with an ethos of trust and respect, in our collaboration with TIV, we were by no means 'inhabiting each other's castles' (Somekh, 2002). Although we made considerable efforts to engage with TIV on their terms, working with partners outside academia inevitably has implications for how the research and the needs of the research are understood. Despite our efforts, we felt that our partner was not always fully aware of our motivations and requirements in terms of the research.

Collaborating with a partner outside academia was, undoubtedly, essential for the project's inception and beneficial for all concerned. However, whether one is working with community organisations or government departments, it is difficult to underestimate the potential gulf between the two cultures. Partners are unlikely to fully appreciate the methodology, rigours and parameters of academic research, and researchers are unlikely to fully understand their partners' constraints and daily priorities. We were by no means novices in working with organisations comparable to TIV, yet it was impossible for us to forecast specific

misunderstandings. In developing such collaborations a great deal can be negotiated and compensations can be planned, but ultimately researchers must be prepared to deal with tensions, to be flexible and to share control of the research situation. Equally, there is a need for research funding bodies to be sympathetic and even supportive of the probable adaptations that will occur in this type of collaborative research. It is possible then, for immensely rich and valuable research material to be generated, albeit different from what may have initially been envisaged.

Producing mutually beneficial research

The methodological design of the Viewfinder project was intended to reduce the exploitative nature of research encounters; to be an ethical undertaking from which all those involved could benefit. Much has been written, particularly within Sociological literature, about the ethics of social research (Davies, 1999). It has become unacceptable to engage research subjects without their informed consent and assurance that involvement will not result in any harm to the participants (British Sociological Association, 2002). Some, particularly feminist researchers and those developing participatory methods, have taken this further, advocating projects in which the researchers are not the sole beneficiaries (Reason and Bradbury, 2001).

Providing shared benefits was one of the prime motivations for combining research with training. As researchers, we were not only able to investigate our topic of interest, but gained an insight into the possibilities of new research methodologies. The provision of training over a period of three months facilitated conducting longitudinal research and creating a situation of open communication. It also overcame some of the difficulties often associated with recruiting and retaining immigrant and refugee participants because it offered structure, a safe, welcoming environment and tangible benefits (Bloch, 1999; Miller, 2004).

TIV benefited by establishing important links with the University and other organisations and demonstrating their ability to work in such situations and fulfil the requirements of their funders. They also benefited from an insight into research

and our working culture, as we did from the insight into theirs. TIV expressed keen interest about undertaking similar collaborations in the future.

The project benefited the participants not only in terms of gaining photography skills and an Open College Network certificate. Being involved was itself part of the socialisation and integration of participants in terms of development of language skills, social skills and self confidence; the opportunity to discuss concerns; and learning about the place in which they live. After one of the Saturday Viewfinder sessions, one participant was asked about his plans for the week and he replied that he had been thinking so much about the day that he had not really thought past it. For him, Viewfinder was an extremely important part of his life.

Encouraged by Viewfinder one participant has recently been involved in a project with the BBC and others have expressed interest in finding out more about photography and the media. Several have enquired about study at the University and our presence may have served to break down some barriers about the accessibility of this for them. Two participants have found jobs using references from TIV which were based on their performance during Viewfinder.

Participants were also given the opportunity to be involved in something that did not focus on their immigration status: photography is a mainstream activity and the University is a mainstream organisation. The topic, too, valued their input as people with particular experiences, rather than as objects of a particular political system or policy implementation. This no doubt contributed to the participants' positive responses to the project.

The dissemination of the Viewfinder project through the touring exhibition was particularly beneficial for the partners and participants involved. The exhibition raised the profile of the project and made it accessible to a wide audience thereby giving a sense of satisfaction and a boost to self esteem to us, the participants and TIV. Furthermore, the exhibition contributed towards the promotion of positive images of asylum seekers and refugees (Home Office 2005).

Maintaining validity in research findings

We have argued so far that by innovatively combining visual, experiential, participatory and longitudinal approaches, and by being reflexive and flexible, we were able to create a research situation of open communication and mutual benefit. This generated a richness and depth of research material and understanding that may otherwise not have been possible. We have addressed some of the strengths and weaknesses in both planned and enacted methodologies, with discussion of how this has influenced research findings. However, it is important also to consider the overall implications of our methodology for the validity of our empirical findings about perceptions and experiences of Public Open Space.

We faced two major challenges to the validity of the research findings in this project. The first was ensuring that our interpretations of the participants' comments and images were accurate and truly represented their perceptions and experiences. Linked to this, we were mindful of the ever-present potential for researcher bias. This was made particularly difficult by the language barrier with some of the group members. However, as Morgan (1997) argues, these issues are most problematic when they are ignored. Through triangulation and a reflexive focus throughout the project, we were confident that we were not mis-representing participants (Rose, 1997). Having close contact with the participants over three months enabled trusting relations to be built and for interpretations to be checked.

The second major challenge was that the small number of participants limited our ability to compare perceptions and experiences, and possibly threw up fewer ideas for exploration during the project than would a larger group. In hindsight, however, the deficiencies in breadth in this project were more that made up for in the depth and richness of the material that we gathered. Had the group been larger we may not have established the intimacy and trust that ultimately made the methodology a success. Although some have argued that generalisations can be made by using qualitative techniques (Silverman, 2001), we concur more with Mason's assertion (1996) that explanations can have 'wider resonance'. Indeed, we hope that both the methodology that we employed and our theoretical conclusions (Rishbeth and Finney forthcoming) will be tested by other researchers.

Conclusions

The Viewfinder project aimed to combine methods and approaches to produce a research situation that would engage a marginalized group and enable open communication and shared benefits. Particular focus was placed on gaining depth of understanding of individual's perceptions and experience of Public Open Space (POS) by prioritising visual, experiential, participatory and longitudinal methods. This paper is an open critique of our experience that highlights successes but does not shy away from discussing the difficulties we encountered (Leyshon, 2002).

Several aspects of the methodology showed particular potential for development in both research and consultation exercises about Public Open Space. The combination of research with photography training facilitated a focus on visual methods, site visits and longitudinal research. These were all crucial in developing trust and establishing an environment of open and honest communication, and these issues were particularly pertinent with the asylum seeker and refugee participants involved (Miller, 2004). In-depth understandings of the group's perceptions and experiences were built up because of the variety of types of research material collected and the sustained contact during the three month project. Using photography also to some extent overcame linguistic and cultural barriers and allowed the participants to direct and tell their own stories.

Perhaps the most successful individual element of the methodology was the focus on visits to POS. The outings were fun and informal and produced very rich research material that captured the subtleties and immediacy of participants' responses to place. However, the full benefit of this method was only reaped when combined with follow-up interviews and activities that allowed participants to reflect on their experiences and their visual documentation of them.

The collaboration with partners outside academia was not without problems particularly in relation to funding and provision of training. The uncertainties that resulted could have to some extent been overcome if we had ensured our partners had a thorough and committed understanding of our motivations and the needs of the research. 'Inhabiting each other's castles' (Somekh, 2002) prior to

collaboration would certainly have minimised stress and uncertainty during fieldwork.

However, by responding to the tensions and dilemmas in a flexible and creative manner, and by being prepared to share control of the research situation, we were able to convert challenges into opportunities for the research (Hill, 2004; Robson, 2002). This necessitated a focus on reflexivity that encouraged us to examine the nature of the material we were collecting (Rose, 1997) leading, ultimately, to a more thorough research project.

The methodological experiences of the Viewfinder project illustrate the potential for landscape and planning research of adopting creative methodologies that combine qualitative techniques to generate very in-depth research. Focusing on the experiential, using photography and taking time to nurture relationships and collect material were particularly successful here. Many of the ideas discussed in this paper also have resonance for consultation processes, particularly those that are concerned with understanding the perceptions and experiences of marginalised communities.

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Footnotes

1. A pseudonym has been used for TIV
2. More information on the Planning For Real technique can be found on the Neighbourhood Initiative Foundation's website. www.nif.co.uk/planningforreal/ (accessed 08/11/05)

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Publication 3

Powell, M. and Rishbeth, C. (2012) Walking Voices: flexibility in place and meanings of place by first generation migrants. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 103(1), pp.69-84.

FLEXIBILITY IN PLACE AND MEANINGS OF PLACE BY FIRST GENERATION MIGRANTS.

Mark Powell and Clare Rishbeth

ABSTRACT

The Walking Voices research project investigated the experience and perception of local places of first generation migrants. Two themes are addressed: the scope of the outdoor environment to support a sense of belonging to new places, and how choices and values enacted in the public realm might reflect changing transnational identities. The fieldwork focused on one neighbourhood in Sheffield, UK, and engaged participants from five countries of origin in self-recorded audio techniques. Analysis of narratives revealed a process of engagement with everyday places, and that emotional qualities of place attachment can be strengthened by the recognition of transnational links. The visibility of activities and interactions in outdoor places was useful both for the learning of everyday skills, and for modelling diverse cultures within the neighbourhood. We suggest that the representational qualities of place both reflect and shape transnational identities, and perceptions of these inform choices of engagement or disassociation.

KEY WORDS: Place attachment, migration, ethnicity, landscape, United Kingdom, audio narratives.

INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on the experience of everyday landscapes by first generation migrants within the context of urban communities. In contrast to a common ‘ethnic lens’ in migration research, which emphasises bounded ethnic identity as a unit of analysis (Schiller and Çağlar, 2009), we start instead with a locality, one neighbourhood. Though the eyes of a sample of residents who were born and grew

up outside the UK, we unpick the nuances of engagement with mundane local landscapes: how these are represented, appropriated and given meaning. We examine how this engagement shapes and reflects identities with both transnational and local dimensions. The research methods used, primarily participant led walking commentaries, were designed to enable discussion of these complex and fluid qualities.

This paper explores two interrelated themes, reflected in the two empirical sections:

- The extent to which familiarity and participation in the public realm post-migration can inform development of place attachment.
- The relationship between expressions of transnational identities and engagement with different urban localities.

Our work is based in a British urban context with migrants from less affluent backgrounds, though we hope the conclusions will expand understandings of place attachment in diverse situations and locations. First we review the current debates and interdisciplinary understandings that inform the paper, leading to the research aims and methodological approach.

Landscapes of migration: new beginnings in unfamiliar places

Personal experiences of migration can be characterised by a movement, or series of movements, from the familiar environment of an earlier stage of life. Accounts by first generation migrants commonly emphasise the stress of arrival and the experience of exclusion, often coupled with worries concerning the expectations of family members still overseas (Armstrong, 2004). The status of new migrants is often complex or ambiguous, migrant communities disproportionately live in areas of multiple deprivation (Jacobs and Tinsley, 2006), and can be subject to practices of resistance by disenfranchised white resident communities (Watson, 2006). There are important factors for comparison with the country just left, with some migrants escaping conditions of poverty and persecution, others arriving from locations of comparative security. Individuals are affected differently due to diversity of legal status, economic resources, extent of support of a receiving

community and ability to access good quality public services (Cook et al., 2008). We acknowledge that some migrants are in more privileged positions (Collins, 2009), but our research addresses the majority experience, and is situated in a neighbourhood identified as having multiple aspects of deprivation¹.

New migrants undertake processes of familiarisation and appropriation as they move in and through new places of residence, and ‘learn to be local’. We analyse the significance of experiential qualities of landscape in reflecting processes of change in personal and community identities; developing understandings of neighbourhood that describe how ‘fitting in’ is affected by perceptions of ethnicity, gender and religious affiliation (Dwyer, 2000).

The concept of ‘place attachment’ is useful in discussing this combination of everyday practices and constructs of place (Altman and Low, 1992; Kaltenborn and Bjerke, 2002). Our research project is positioned within the premise that the detail of “social exchanges, memories, images and daily use of the material setting”, is integral to the meaning, and potential transformation of place (Low, 2000, p.128). The ‘more-than-visual’ dimension of landscape is found in Ingold’s thesis of dwelling: human’s embedded and ongoing interaction in place (Ingold, 2000). By revealing individual experiences, in their potential complexity and contradiction, we explore how new arrivals establish their own way to ‘belong’, or ‘know their place’ (Armstrong, 2004, p.239). We identify belonging in this context as describing an emotional attachment rather than an official representation of citizenship.

The notion that place attachment is a form of ‘rootedness’, established and developed over time (Altman and Low, 1992), can imply a direct link between longevity of residence and strength of feeling. We consider the potential conflict between place attachment and personal histories of migration, which are characterised by an abrupt break with the landscapes of childhood or early adult life. To varying extents, research on the use of outdoor space among people from different cultural groupings highlights the importance of childhood environments and recreational qualities (for example: Rishbeth, 2001; Burgess et al., 1988). The physical and cultural dislocation between the ‘then’ and ‘now’ can heighten a

sense of loss in a newly arrived migrant, with regard to both built and more naturalistic environments. Individuals may respond to new environments by seeking familiar references and making comparisons to places of their childhood (Cooper-Marcus, 1992). Previous research suggests a nuanced relationship with time passing and response to place, and that unfamiliar landscapes can unexpectedly juxtapose with qualities that trigger nostalgic emotions (Toila-Kelly, 2004; Rishbeth and Finney, 2006). Ethnographic studies of transnational communities describe perceptions of place attachment, shaped both by values embedded in differing lifeworlds, and the day to day patterns of behaviour by which everyday life is altered on moving to a new country (Low et al, 2002; Armstrong, 2004; Sandercock, 2003).

The flux of transnational identities reflected in multiplicity of place experiences.

“Axes of identity such as those of race, class, sexuality, age and gender never operate aspatially but are inextricably bound up with the particular spaces and places within which, and in relation to which, people live.” (Bondi and Rose, 2003, p.232).

In looking at how migrants develop personal responses to specific local places, we need to also acknowledge the social and political context of ethnically diverse urban neighbourhoods. Vertovec (2007) describes population ‘superdiversity’ as the increasing complexity of variables; including countries of origin, transnational connections, socio-economic and legal status of migrants to the UK. Urban neighbourhoods reveal this superdiversity through proximity; the interaction in public spaces of people with different cultural backgrounds. Debates regarding cohesion and integration often focus on social networks (Platt, 2009; Forrest and Kearns, 2001), but largely missing is an understanding of the qualities and contributions of outdoor places in facilitating or deterring these dynamics (Witten et al. 2003; Hudson et al., 2007). How people value the public realm can highlight questions of place and placelessness, and what it means for people to share spaces (Low and Lawrence-Zuniuga, 2003; Relph, 1976; Sandercock, 2003).

Research across many disciplinary fields has focused on the fluidity of urban life, and the way resident populations respond to and reshape their places of living. Hannerz (1992) describes how local cultures are increasingly affected by non-local influences and how the mixing of global and local networks produce new transnational identities in various local contexts (Conradson and Latham, 2005; Low and Lawrence-Zuniga, 2003). We recognise that referring to ‘transnational identities’ can be a slippery term, given the increasing scope and breadth of global influences and connections across members of all communities (Crang et al., 2003). For the purposes of this research, and in light of the focus on first generation migrants, we use it to describe personal and community identities that are informed by “multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Basch et al., 1994, p.8). Notions of hybridity, of the continual shifting of identity in response to a range of cultural influences and engagements, can be expressed through different ways of valuing and using the public realm (Ghosh and Wong, 2003). However, it can also lead to disassociation and alienation from a locality or community (Faist, 2000; Bhabha, 1994).

The tensions between ‘mobility and emplacement’ (Conradson and Latham, 2005, p.228) are undoubtedly played out in everyday practices across multiple scales and territories. Personal experiences of disadvantage and oppression, for example connected to gender, displacement or poverty, may be exacerbated by conditions of urban living. Conversely, for some, the city may offer new freedoms and opportunities (Wilson, 2001). Diasporic identities can be represented as a series of interactions that support fluid notions of belonging (Yeoh and Huang, 2000; Dwyer, 2000) and “ways in which immigrants use such ties to create places for themselves” (Ehrkamp, 2005, p.349). Ehrkamp (2005), in her ethnographic work with Turkish migrant communities in Germany, suggests that transnational links are ‘placed’ within neighbourhood spaces, emphasising a transforming effect which potentially changes both the user and the places themselves.

Understanding meanings of place through the viewpoints of first generation migrant communities illuminates dual aspects of difference: of unfamiliar landscapes and in perceptions of personal identity. The question of visibility in the public realm: ‘who you are, who you are seen to be, how you see and how you are

seen' (Rose, 2003, p.72) has important dimensions of gender, class, age, ethnicity and religion. Migration can disrupt and disturb gender identities (Batnitzky et al., 2009; Hugo, 2000), and it is important to recognise the construction of male and female roles across different locations and by different generations (McDowell, 2004, p.701). Masculine and feminine identities can be both flexible and strategic (Batnitzky, *ibid*): negotiated differentially in private and public domains (and indeed, challenge simplistic classification of these spheres of life (Bondi and Rose, 2003)). Hagan and Ebaugh (2003) describe how religious identity impacts on a personal and community level and at different stages of migrant routes and settlement. The organising networks and points of gathering of religious practice shape temporal experiences of place, and create a visible cultural representation (Çağlar, 2001; White, 1998). Noussia and Lyons (2009) discuss that through interactions, activities and appropriations, modes of sociability in the public domain are informed by these various and interrelated identities; and suggest the particular importance of shared outdoor spaces to people in 'liminal moments' such as newly arrived migrants.

In addressing intersections of migration and landscape experiences, these studies highlight the tensions between place attachment (rootedness) and transnational identities (fluidity). This context informs the primary aims of this research as stated in the introduction: to develop understandings of how a life history of migration shapes an individual's perception, values and use of public space. As argued by Olwig and Hastrop (1997), these theories can be best explored through rich ethnographic studies that site culture in experiences of everyday landscapes. We identified a need to undertake qualitative research which engaged with first generation migrants from diverse ethnic backgrounds, and developed a methodological approach which would enable participant-led, experiential accounts of outdoor places.

THE WALKING VOICES PROJECT: METHODOLOGY

Methodological approaches which allow exploration of the representational qualities of everyday places are important in understanding cosmopolitan urban contexts. This research aimed to connect Ingold's anthropological theories of

embedded interactions with social sciences practices that explore tangible everyday interactions in urban neighbourhoods. Our approach was also informed by qualitative, reflexive methodologies (Armstrong, 2004), and work in the cultural geography and anthropological field on experience and meaning of walking and journeying (Edensor, 2000; 'Memoryscape', Butler, 2005; Ingold, 2006). Techniques of on-site research (such as Finney and Rishbeth, 2006; Burgess, 1995) have tended to centre on staged visits, or have relied heavily on the researcher's observational position. We identified a need to combine a focus on landscapes of everyday use, with a research methodology that enabled articulation of the immediacy of multi-sensory, temporal, physical and emotional experience of place.

Embracing the differing world-views and cultural understandings of those who inhabit the same space has required adopting a methodological approach that aimed to avoid categorisation of 'the other' (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). It is important to acknowledge the dangers of essentialising ethnicity over other dimensions of identity, such as age, gender, status and family context, so we chose to work across ethnic groupings (Schiller and Çağlar, 2009). The qualitative approach led to working with a small sample of key participants with repeated contact over a few months, triangulated with a broader case study approach at the neighbourhood scale over a year.

We designed a 'Walking Voices' methodology based on self-recorded audio, in which participants were loaned a portable minidisk recorder to make outdoor commentaries. The researcher is intentionally absent, with the routes, length and content of the commentary directed by the participant. The project was conducted with collaboration from BBC Radio Sheffield, with selected extracts broadcast within their programmes ².

Overview of research actions - Below we outline the main research actions, followed by a description of the project neighbourhood, discussion of sampling, ethical considerations and awareness of limitations.

Phase one: Scoping of study neighbourhood, establishing over sixty local contacts, liaising with key organisations and individuals, spending time in public spaces and discussing project with potential participants³. The participants were trained by BBC Radio Sheffield in the use of mini-disk recorders. Data produced: researcher fieldnotes.

Phase two: The eleven key participants were asked to independently make ‘on site’ audio recordings of everyday walks or journeys over a three month period (late summer to early winter). They were briefed to talk as they walked, and to comment on what they saw and felt, or any thoughts triggered by their surroundings. There was no specific instruction to comment on their own ethnic identity or position as migrants, though through conversations prior to and during the fieldwork period, participants were aware that the research and radio programme contributions were about experiences of place by people who were born in other countries and now live in Burngreave. The expected focus on walking through the local neighbourhood was partially altered by the participant’s own decisions to make recordings in a wide range of places: throughout Sheffield, on visits to the countryside, and while driving. The recordings were mostly made on the participant’s initiative, so the number and duration of recordings varied greatly, and in general the recordings were fewer but longer than expected. Not all participants found making solo recordings easy, and about one quarter of the recordings were made with a researcher walking alongside as an ‘active listener’⁴. Twenty-two audio clips, and extended discussion on the methodology, can be found on the project website, www.walkingvoices.group.shef.ac.uk. Data produced: 52 recordings, average length thirty minutes. Distribution is illustrated in table 1.

Distribution of recordings across key participants.

| Gender | Age | Country of origin | Total recordings |
|--------|-------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| M | 20-30 | Kurdistan | 10 |
| M | 30-40 | The Yemen (childhood in Egypt) | 4 |
| M | 60-70 | The Yemen | 3 |
| M | 20-30 | Somalia | 8 |
| M | 30-40 | The Yemen | 2 |
| M | 50-60 | Jamaica | 3 |
| F | 20-30 | Pakistan | 6 |
| F | 20-30 | Jamaica | 12 |
| F | 30-40 | Jamaica | 3 |
| F | 20-30 | The Yemen | 1 |
| F | 20-30 | The Yemen | 1 |

Phase three: Reflective shared analysis. All audio material was transcribed and coded in Nvivo. Project analysis was data led and resulted in groupings developing around a series of common themes that included identifying values relating to open spaces, discussing gender identities, migration histories and social frameworks. Geographic context was established by also coding for specific locations and activities. The relevance of key research themes identified through this process was tested through a process of re-visiting the audio recordings and further feedback from research participants. After the initial data analysis, interviews were arranged to discuss the emerging findings with selected participants (three interviews), non-participants (three interviews⁵), and with key contacts made with environmental and community organisations (five interviews). This ‘reflective loop’ allowed us to seek confirmation of key issues which emerged from the raw data, to analyse significance, and identify areas of convergence and divergence with regard to experiences and values. Integral to this phase of the project was ongoing contact with participants and collaboration for the radio broadcasts. Data produced: transcripts and interview notes.

The neighbourhood - In exploring the issues of shared space and cultural diversity we identified a neighbourhood which typifies residential superdiversity in UK cities. Burngreave is one of the most ethnically diverse neighbourhoods in

Sheffield. The neighbourhood has a local history of accommodating new arrivals to the city as well as being a home of white British people and long settled migrant communities. In the 2001 census, the key population groups were White (56%), Pakistani (19%), Caribbean (6%) and African (5%) (Office of National Statistics, 2001). 22% of residents counted by the census were born overseas (O.N.S., *ibid*). The mix of white British and migrants from the Caribbean defined the area from the mid twentieth century, though over the last three decades there has been an increasing Asian (specifically Pakistani and Yemeni) presence. More recently, the area has seen new resident groups from areas such as North Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, and is the one of the main areas in Sheffield where asylum seekers are accommodated. Burngreave is defined in statistical terms as one of the more deprived areas of Sheffield. 48% of houses are characterised by two or more aspects of disadvantage (employment, education, health and housing quality) and 52% of households do not own a vehicle (O.N.S., *ibid*).

Sampling and selection process of key participants - Wishing to focus on experiences of migration rather than ethnic identity we aimed to recruit participants from diverse backgrounds but all living within the chosen neighbourhood. The recruitment of our ‘key participants’ was a gradual and dispersed process, which involved making contact with groups and individuals through activities such as community walking programmes, religious and cultural groups, oral history, educational and environmental projects, conversations on park benches and attending lunch clubs. In attracting participants, the intensive nature and unfamiliar methods of the fieldwork were counterbalanced in part by the engaging nature of the project and combination of research and radio production. The need to build confidence in the process of recording and trust in the use of the material, and the repeated contact and support given to participants limited the number of key participants to eleven.

The criteria for participation required that all of our key participants had migrated to the UK, some recently and some decades ago, all spoke English and all were living in or near to Burngreave. They were six men and five women, ages spanning their 20s to 60s, each with different family networks, physical abilities and access to transport. The choice of Burngreave as the residential area of focus,

shaped a majority participation with working class jobs (for example: bus driver, steel worker, care assistant), but due to the diversity of recruitment routes the project also recruited three participants in professional spheres of employment (housing, nursing and administration). Their countries of origin were Jamaica (three participants), the Yemen (five participants), with one participant each from Iraq, Pakistan and Somalia. Some had spent significant time in other countries prior to moving to Britain. This spread was not intended to be statistically representative, but did echo the main migrant communities in the neighbourhood. All research sampling limits participants through intentional criteria or unintentional bias. We suggest that this approach based on participant led, creative methods, combined with the 'shared benefit' of media skills and community dissemination (Finney and Rishbeth, 2006), accessed a different range of contributors that would have taken part in more traditional social science methods and selection strategies.

Quality and limitations of data - The individual commentaries proved an intimate method of enquiry. In studying everyday activities, we focused on much which is habitual and usually unarticulated, and by hearing directly our participants' voices, we had the opportunity to 'eavesdrop' on their underlying senses of fitting in or standing out: their self-defined invisibility or visibility. Issues of integration and belonging were articulated through the process of real time thinking, actions and observation. By mostly absenting ourselves as researchers from the production of the research material we aimed to reduce the 'observer effect', though we acknowledge that awareness of the recordings end uses will have shaped participants accounts to differing degrees.

We hoped to address some of the issues of power relations in traditional research methods (Skelton, 2001) and challenge the premise of 'other' with regard to our positioning as white, educated, affluent, British born citizens (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). These objectives were supported by emphasis of the free agency of the participants regarding how they directed their part in the research project, stressing the participant's role as experts, and fostering mutual respect over time. We allowed participants significant choice in the level of their involvement, amount of researcher contact received, and the level of detail given of personal

circumstances, supporting the participants as creative generators of their own material. Techniques of recording were adapted and timescales nudged in order to accommodate the busy or erratic nature of participants' lifestyles. While we gained some insight into their personal histories the life biography interview technique was not a component of this project. In choosing not to use one of the researchers' traditional 'powers', the right to ask questions and impose consistency of method, we suggest that the emphasis of the findings was shaped by issues of genuine importance to those involved. We acknowledge the limits of this approach, and in particular the ultimate role of the researcher in evaluating significance and making representations across the material generated by different participants.

Working over a period of time with a small number of committed individuals was a format that enabled vital building of trust, ongoing reflection and exploration of nuances of experience. The insights of the main body of data gained from eleven individuals are, naturally, not intended to be representative of all migrants of their particular ethnic background or gender. Instead they give a deeper, more immersive perspective on the complexities of identities and experiences as people at various stages of life, living in the UK after growing up in another country. As such, we see this as complementing research studies which work with a greater number using one-off indoor located interviews or questionnaires. Phase three of the research, where emerging findings were discussed with a range of individuals and organisations in the area, was an important to the process of contextualisation and analysis which further informed our conclusions.

LANDSCAPE PARTICIPATION AND POSITIONING AS DIMENSIONS OF BELONGING.

The recordings made by the participants gave a breath of insights into the daily experience of outdoor places by participants, and indicated the depth of meanings and resonances that these places afforded. In the following section, we discuss the relationship between landscape experiences and processes of settlement and integration of first generation migrants. First, we address the specific characteristics of the urban local landscape as a location for everyday participation, and the significance of visibility of practice.

Notable in these discussion of these findings is the importance of a quality important in analysing spatial design of outdoor spaces, that of visual permeability (Gehl et al. 2006, p.40). We define this as ability of activities and interactions positioned outdoors to be incidentally seen, possibly even engaged with, compared to those of most indoor locations. Visual permeability (multiple ways of viewing in and out of a place) can also overlap with qualities of physical permeability (multiple ways of moving in and out of a place). Both tend to be higher in public outdoor environments, though in this paper we primarily focus on visual permeability⁵.

Qualities of familiarisation and participation - The process of making a home in a new country or city requires ongoing responses to the norms and expectations of a social environment. In recounting past experiences of moving to the UK, and the process of settling down in Sheffield, the participants described a number of ways in which they learnt to adapt to a new location. Initial problems were often those of disorientation, a lack of knowledge of local facilities, adapting to unpredictable weather patterns and winter darkness. The outdoor public realm can be a component of culture shock (Churchman and Mittrami, 1997), but our research found that its affordances can also be a means for overcoming this. The visual permeability of outdoor locations, such as bus stops and pavements, allows incidental observations and engagements with others and a gradual means of gaining local and cultural specific knowledge. Newcomers use their initiative and over time become more apt at reading and interpreting the local environment, developing their understanding of how best to act in various public situations and spaces. In the participants' recordings, there was evidence both of the opportunities of information gathering while outdoors, and of the relationship between local knowledge and insider status.

Migrants experience the immediate challenge of making a home in an area, and one priority is to gain knowledge of their locality. Khaled is a young man in his early twenties who identifies himself as Kurdish, and had lived in Sheffield less than two years. His migration journey, five years overland across Europe, was an experience that developed his skills of improvisation, adaption and language

learning. In a number of walks, he demonstrated how he used the outdoor public realm as an important resource for learning the social rules of living within a cosmopolitan context like Burngreave. He pointed out which streets were safe and how places changed at different times of day, and how his walking around the city enabled him to learn English words. By “collecting words” from the signs associated with construction sites, labels in art galleries or articles in free newspapers, and connecting them with the pictorial and situational element Khaled improved his English skills. His learning processes, linguistic and spatial, were fundamentally connected to his active engagement in the urban landscape.

In contrast to the relatively newly arrived status of Khaled, the experiences of another participant can give an insight into the ongoing interactions with outdoor places as migrants become long term or permanent residents. Shami moved to the UK from Pakistan to practice as a nurse six years ago, married a man also from Pakistan, and now has a young child. One of the ways in which she has become more knowledgeable about her local neighbourhood is through the ‘Healthy Walks’ programme. Park rangers lead a weekly group walk around the local neighbourhood, linking streets and parks. These are popular with women from Asian, British Asian and white British backgrounds, who share information and casual conversation with the rangers and other participants. For Shami it provided an intergenerational bridge between herself and older women of Pakistani heritage. Alexander et al (2007) states the importance of these personal networks, and describe how everyday skills are commonly learnt within migrants’ own ethnic communities, with elder or more established members often informally mentoring new arrivals.

Beyond the individual benefits, the positioning of this relaxed shared activity within the public realm allows visibility between different sectors of the community, and increases incidental meeting and subsequent personal recognition by participants. The visual and physical permeability of outdoor locations is significant in terms of the breadth of potential interaction, and broadens the possibilities of who meets who, who might be drawn into the conversation, and who witnesses the encounter. Our findings suggest that the potential of social exchange with known or partially known people can increase confidence in a

personal sense of belonging, one that can bridge definitions of community defined along simplistic lines of religion or ethnicity.



Figure 1: Shami visits her local shops.

In her independent recordings for the project, Shami was keen to highlight her detailed knowledge of her neighbourhood, especially her walks to local shops. A final interview with her explored the importance of this for her own feeling of belonging, and the qualities of this in relation to her visits back to her parent's house in Pakistan.

“I’m glad to come back here [after visiting Pakistan], you know, like it’s more time here now, so I’m used to, I look like I’m born here now. So I’m more here, so it’s like I miss this place too much. I miss because daily activities are here now, like that’s my house and I’m living this area, or I can shopping to Netto, it’s so different but back home you are not going for shopping, you know household, it’s like everybody else is doing it”.

Shami demonstrates that the social networks between the country of origin, and those in the country of residence, are in flux and are renegotiated when returning on holiday (Ramji, 2006). She has established a sense of rootedness in Sheffield, and this is marked by her perception that she looks “like I am born here now”. In

part though her confidence in the negotiation of public space, she identifies herself as an insider, and recognises this place as her own (Armstrong, 2004).

The visibility of being outside informs a social positioning - The interrelationships between different facets of an individual's identity shape perceptions of outdoor locations. People experience various forms of personhood in different areas of their social life, so a man may experience life as a son and a father, as a worker and a worshipper, and these social positionings can be demonstrated in different ways and in different places (Strathern, 1988). Equally, we underline understandings of gender identity as culturally and historically variable (Massey, 1994; Moore, 1988).

Movement through the landscape responds to expectations of gender roles, age, family responsibilities and work skills. This was reflected in routes taken and places visited, and interpreted by the participants' own discussions of how they negotiate their public placement and interactions. Spatial boundaries were contested and renegotiated by individuals within communities; described in the specific nuances of representation regarding when men and women should be seen, and how they should act in particular places (Dwyer, 2000; Low and Lawrence-Zuniga, 2003; Ardener, 1993). To explore these dynamics it is useful to focus on the participants born in The Yemen (three men, two women). The Yemeni community in Sheffield is well established and includes men recruited to work in the steel works in the 1950s and their extended families, plus more recent arrivals. Through understanding individuals' social representations of being outdoors, we can examine how these relate to the diversity of roles, with particular regard to age and gender.

In our initial introductions in Burngreave, the mosques in the area were often introduced to us as the 'Pakistani mosque' and the 'Yemini mosque', though the research subsequently revealed more varied participation that also reflected proximity to work and family commitments. The centrally positioned mosque by Ellesmere Green acted as a pivotal location for the male Yemini participants, with the older men attending prayer at different times of the day. Lunch clubs for elderly residents in the Burngreave are segregated by gender and national

background, with men walking to ‘their’ mosque for afternoon prayers. The benches on the Green outside the mosque are informally appropriated for socialising around the time for prayers: a located representation of religion, gender and ethnic identity. The younger women of Yemini heritage informally avoid this micro-area around prayer times, in order to minimise the possibility of entering into inappropriate conversations with men outside their kinship group. Temporal aspects of place are linked to the gendered quality of these benches.

Socialise is like you socialise back home. Place where everybody meets and everybody sits down, have a talk. (Abdullah, from The Yemen).



Figure 2. The central green in Burngreave

For many of the participants, exposure to the scrutiny of their own ethnic community is an integral dimension of being outdoors. Understanding expectations according to religious identity, gender and family roles shape an individual’s criteria for feeling at ease in different spaces.

“I hated that road... I am very wary of going there because there are a lot of Arab men and women always looking at you and judging you, seeing what you got on, seeing how you look, seeing if your scarf is on properly...” (Shireen)

Shireen, through her intimate knowledge of both the Arab community and the neighbourhood of Burngreave, articulated the factors by which she can be perceived by others. When outdoors she cannot control who might see her, but she can influence this by being careful as to when and where she travels, and in her decision to wear a headscarf.

It is possible to identify covert places, where usual roles could be subverted. Some participants with a Yemeni background acknowledge the younger generations' strategies of independence, and noted that while they did go out to night clubs, *"they are not open about it"* (Abdullah from *The Yemen*). Participants also observed how individuals are willing to help women who challenge traditional notions of what is appropriate behaviour. One participant explained a strategy that allowed women to buy their own cigarettes, an activity not condoned among many people with Yemeni heritage. The relaxed attitude of the local shop keeper was crucial: *"Only because the guy in the shop was brought up in this country and is modern and understands. She would never dare do that to a man who was brought up in [The Yemen]"*.

Yemeni community members develop complex understandings of what it means to belong, how to behave and what to expect from other members of their cultural background. The placing of events that are problematic within a community's stated norms are hidden, often inside, and sometimes in an alliance of younger generations that bridges gender. Outdoors, participants discussed the importance of appearing to act in an appropriate manner so as not to bring shame on their family (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992; Skeggs, 1997). The visibility of the streetscape is an important stage in which to model acceptable behaviour.

We have discussed representation of roles within a community of people known or partially known to each other, such as the comparably close social networks of the Yemeni community in Burngreave. However, the performance of difference, and acceptances of this, are vital to qualities of cohesion (Young, 1990). Thelma, a Jamaican born woman, described in one recording the potential of neighbourhood to model welcome or resistance. When she first came to the UK six years before the research fieldwork period, she lived with her son in a social housing area of

Sheffield where there were very few non-white residents. She recounts this as her first awareness of racism, and looks back on that period of her life as intensely unhappy. This time prompted in her a political awareness of the history of colonialism in the Caribbean and its transnational consequences (Gilroy, 2002). As noted by Sandercock (2003, p91), these historic understandings can acquire a more specific reality when mixed with more recent experiences of white racism, and in Thelma's case informed her own sense of identity as a black woman. Thelma moved to Burngreave and found herself able to identify with, and feel a sense of a belonging within, this more cosmopolitan context.

These emotional geographies of fear and security also pertain to dynamics of influence, demonstrated when Thelma spoke with pride about the success of the Afro-Caribbean cultural centre. Another community worker, of Yemini heritage, noted the positive effect of some pubs, once associated with crime, now converted into 'respectful' mosques. The visibility of ethnic and religious communities is important to participants, and mentioned in audio recordings and interviews alongside references to the diversity of population in Burngreave. Here, a complex mix of personalities, cultural and ethnic backgrounds provide a reassuring context to live, where difference is not viewed as problematic or socially awkward.

The representation of similarity and difference, in the physicality of the streetscape, and in how public space is used, appears to promote an emotional sense of belonging in a shared social place. Through interaction with their local environment, residents experience not a 're-creation' of life in a country of origin, but a creative process which responds and reflects new forms of hybrid and negotiated identities. We explore this in more detail in the following section, in which we focus on the role of movement and choice in the city in reflecting cross-cultural and inter-community engagement.

MOVEMENT THROUGH THE CITY AS REFLECTING AND RESHAPING CULTURAL IDENTITIES.

All of the participants had moved to the UK from abroad, mostly as adults, and their perspectives of place were informed by this realisation of personal opportunity. Migration may have been initiated by different balances of push and

pull factors, choices and chances, but their concepts of the future were informed by their move to Sheffield and the range of ongoing possibilities. Aspirations were often shaped by a tension between keeping contact with their own ethnic group and respecting and enjoying its cultural traditions, and a desire to embrace new opportunities. Negotiating aspects of individual and community identities often took a spatial form, related to daily patterns of connection and distancing. This research found evidence both of sporadic and temporary withdrawal from situated communities, and movement to other places and social contexts within the city.

Movement as temporary escape - Our findings demonstrated that expected interactions within particular social networks could mean that the public realm embodies not only aspects of friendship but of obligation and commitment to others. The older male participants from The Yemen talked about the expectations others have of them as senior and respected members of their community. They felt obliged to be visible in the public realm: to provide advice, to debate and socialise. Although proud of this position, at times they described these expectations as a tiring commitment. Abdullah stated that he knew “too many people” and how “sometimes you just want to stop and relax with your family”. It was important for many of the participants to be able to spend time where they are less readily recognised, and this usually entailed withdrawing from the immediate neighbourhood of Burngreave.

The participants had a range of strategies for escape into other social contexts, depending on their personal transport options. For the younger men, car ownership was integral to their choices of interaction and escape. Two male participants, both born in The Yemen, regularly drove beyond Sheffield’s city limits. One went with friends to the nearby Peak District area because this area reminded him of rural village landscapes in The Yemen. Another described his enjoyment at driving along the motorway as this awakened memories of long distance driving along featureless roads in the Middle East.

Ali, a retired steel worker, made independent recordings in a number of locations connected to shopping activities: Meadowhall shopping mall, city centre shops and market for fish, halal shops for meat and the market in Burngreave, and Tesco’s

supermarket in Rotherham. Of these trips out, the regular visits to Meadowhall appear less concerned with the practicalities of purchasing and more concerned with passing time and relaxing with other people, mostly new acquaintances though also including friends from the Yemeni community.

“Everywhere you go in Meadowhall there’s a bench to sit down. You can meet your friends there, you can make new friends, you can spend all day sometimes in Meadowhall. I think it’s nice, beautiful. People from all over go there; see some Chinese, some Yemenis, some English, lot of English, lot of Kurdish, some Pakistanis, Somalis. All nations in this Meadowhall”. (Ali, from *The Yemen*)

The anonymity of the shopping mall is an example of an internal space that has similar qualities of permeability to public open space. It provided Ali with a safe and warm environment, one whose privileges he shares with shoppers from all backgrounds, and where he could be sociable but with a level of anonymity. In this different kind of place he found a freedom to engage with others whom he is unlikely to meet in Burngreave.

The recordings highlight a social dimension to these ‘escapes’. The Mall provides an opportunity for Ali to reinvent himself, to step outside of his role as a senior member of a specific ethnic community, to relax and be someone else.

Participants sought a temporary distancing from an established social context which demands certain obligations, and this is achieved at times by opting into a more diverse environment, such as a shopping mall or the city centre, where the social ties are looser. These places give the potential of retaining anonymity while engaging in a sociable, cosmopolitan context. Through the everyday business of using these places, incidental meetings can be both initiated and sustained.

Movement as negotiating alternative lives - For some participants, travel into other parts of the city revealed significant dimensions of cross-cultural exploration. How do these patterns of behaviour relate to notions of belonging and reflections of transnational identities?

Khaled, is the young man with asylum seeker status mentioned earlier in the paper. When Khaled first arrived in Sheffield he lived in Burngreave, but at the time of the project lived with an English family in a white working class area of the city. He was adventurous in his exploration of the city: travelling between neighbourhoods, engaging with different voluntary groups and educational contexts, and maintaining an ethnically and residentially diverse network of friends. He split his time between the new opportunities and socialising with his new adoptive family and friends, with eating, talking and playing backgammon with his 'Kurdish brothers' in Burngreave. But while Khaled enjoyed their company, he also experienced the places where they gather, like the Kurdish restaurant and barbershop, as 'stressful'. This was a place that reinforced a version of masculinity which he associated with his homeland, aspects of which he found less attractive the more time he spent with his 'English friends' in other parts of the city. Through participating in more mixed community groups, Khaled's notions of how to be a Kurdish man in Sheffield were increasingly at odds with those of his Kurdish peers.

Living outside of Burngreave gave Khaled a degree of physical and emotional distance from the social demands and expectations of the Kurdish community. However, this was not an outright rejection of his homeland identity and he attempted to strike a balance between independence and maintaining a place with 'his brothers', demonstrating a 'flexible and strategic masculinity' (Batnitzky et al, 2009). We suggest that Khaled experimented with his own sense of identity in different contexts. Negotiating these differences provided him with a new sense of self, fostering not only new ideas about his own identity, but also how he belonged in Sheffield and how he defined his membership of both located and culturally defined communities. His attachment to local place was in flux as his own sense of transnational connections changed over time.

Though Khaled exemplified movement and competing affiliations most strongly, the provisionality of connection to a local area was expressed by a number of participants. They were aware of the limitations of living in a neighbourhood characterised by poverty and a degraded environment relative to other locations in Sheffield. A number of participants, especially those who had moved to the UK

within the last decade, wanted to better their quality of life and move to an area with lower levels of crime, better facilities and more opportunities for their children. Keeping them within or near to Burngreave was a desire to maintain close associations with their own ethnic and religious communities (as well as affordability constraints). Everyday movements through the city, whether to take children to school in other areas, visit friends, or engage with better public amenities elsewhere, served as ongoing reminders of these long term possibilities.

CONCLUSIONS

In the conclusion we summarise and extend the two key questions posed through this research. First we address the extent to which familiarity and participation in the public realm informs place attachment.

Our research found that local outdoor places have a specific role to play in fostering individual experiences of attachment in superdiverse neighbourhoods, and in the settlement processes of migrant groups. This is closely related to the qualities of visual permeability, layers of social representation and the ambiguity by which places can be perceived and experienced. We recognise the importance of social engagement and acts of cultural creativity which allows the strange to become familiar; both reflecting and reshaping notions of individual and community identities over time. The findings support an understanding of place attachment as one which can be strengthened rather than weakened by recognition of transnational links, in particular by the ‘placing’ of activities, memories and social dynamics within the local (Ehrkamp, 2005).

The data gathered indicated how perceptions of place influenced a sense of belonging and community for new migrants to the UK. Most of our participants had lived in Sheffield for over five years, and their recordings revealed a depth of knowledge about their neighbourhood. The research project positioned us, as researchers, as ‘strangers’ in the experienced landscapes of our participants; a situation that empowered their position as experts with local knowledge and place-specific skills. The ‘openness’ of the research method meant that the focus and scope of these voices were those of the research participants, reducing the impact

of the researcher / observer as far as possible. Through the recording process participants revealed emotional responses and explorations of the urban landscape that encompassed physical, social and cultural dimensions of place.

The experiential context of neighbourhood frames perceptions of the new country for migrants as something permeable or impenetrable, legible or disorientating. Feeling secure and confident in the new local environment is an important step to identifying oneself as an 'insider', and the visual accessibility of social information afforded by being outdoors is utilised by recently arrived migrants as part of this process. The foundation of tacit knowledge is strengthened when residents are able to relate to social networks in the area, and to see diversity of representation in the built environment. National identities, as a Pakistani, a Kurd or a Jamaican, undergo a continual process of change that is directly linked to immersion in a cosmopolitan environment. Notions of belonging with those still living 'back home' are gradually altered through socialisation in this UK context. It is possible to identify Sandercock's 'many ways of belonging' and our research supports her assertion of the enduring importance of place attachment despite the increasing deterritorialisation of community identities (Sandercock, 2003, p.134).

Secondly, we critique the relationship between transnational identities and engagement with different urban localities.

We considered how first generation migrants experience and interpret the landscape around them from the cultural perspectives of their personal history of migration. Ingold's premise is that people continually learn from the environment in which they live, and this leads to new ways of understanding the world and behaving as a part of it. This has provided a useful framework for exploring the temporal relationships between people and place (Ingold, 2000). Our research points to the significance of the visibility of activity in outdoor locations as a form of social accessibility. Breadth of social contacts is encouraged and sustained by the observation and participation in verbal and non-verbal interactions (Alexander et al. 2007; Young, 1990). Utilising Ingold's understanding of taskscape (2000, p.195) we suggest that experiences of community, belonging and identification within a neighbourhood can occur before the development of personal

relationships across ethnic groups. Individuals develop a sense of affiliation with place when familiar strangers are gradually recognised as neighbours. The visibility of neighbours has implications for performance of roles within located communities, providing opportunities to glimpse other ways of living. The viewing of neighbours in semi-private and public spaces is partially enabled through day to day interactions facilitated by shared gender, class and religious identities (Bondi and Rose, 2003; Acker, 2000).

In attending to everyday practices and mobilities, our paper touches on common themes within transnational urbanism of how people demonstrate within the public gaze their acceptability to specific cultural norms (often defined within their ethnic or religious community) (Skeggs, 1997). It is beyond the scope of this research to offer generalisations of gendered and religious identities, but our findings support readings of the urban environment as offering a widening of horizons and increased opportunities, as well as continuing or exasperating constraints for some (Bondi and Rose, 2003; Wilson, 2001). Movement through the city, to give distance from a place where one is known, can be important as an opportunity to experience place with less prescribed social interactions, and to explore and expand notions of identity without fear of social sanction. We suggest that such spaces for cultural exploration and detachment offer a fluidity of interactions where it is possible for individuals and groups to engage with broader contexts of community and belonging.

We argue that the representational aspects of place both reflect and shape transnational identities, and highlight a spatial form of relational and contextual 'positioning' (Dwyer, 2000). By addressing the specific experience of first generation migrants, we arrive at deeper understandings of the multiplicity of imaginations and layered meanings of landscapes (Massey, 2005). As Armstrong (2004) suggests: 'here' and 'there' are experienced through the senses and in tangible qualities of place and time. Developing of affective bonds, both between individuals and between individuals and places, can be important in giving located dimensions to identities which are often in flux. It is through this bodily engagement with specific streets, benches, views and trees, that first generation migrants can recognise connections between different aspects of their life

histories. In Khaled's movements through the city, Shireen's discussion of scarf-wearing and street locations, and Thelma's pride at local community landmarks, it is possible to trace how meanings and symbolic characteristics of landscapes can reflect dimensions of personal identity, and also support a local scale of belonging that bridges notions of divided communities. Within a research field where studies often focus on groups with a shared ethnic heritage, the approach of articulating disparate voices describing a shared neighbourhood offers a fresh perspective on previous research regarding ethnically diverse neighbourhoods.

The distinction of this research is in defining a scale of familiarity - the experience of local landscapes and the social dimensions of these - as important in the establishment of place attachment. Experiential qualities of place are often represented by ambiguity, with people feeling both attracted and dislocated from specific environments. Temporal qualities are one way in which these contradictions are reconciled, both by people moving themselves and in the changing nature of public places through hours, months and years. These engagements are not unique to first generation migrants, but may be heightened by comparisons and ongoing links with countries of origin. As suggested in the title of this paper: flexibility of meanings of place, as well as flexibility of places visited, can be important to first generation migrants. The urban environment has a dual role to play in providing both a growing sense of familiarity and in providing diverse opportunities for a process of change: rootedness and transformation.

FOOTNOTES

1. We define neighbourhood as a geographic territory commonly identified by a place name, and recognise that the boundaries will be perceived differently among residents and authorities. Though focused on the ward of Burngreave, our fieldwork included experiences of places outside the formal boundaries of this area.
2. Participant consent was specifically gained for these clips, for the website, and for printed material.
3. Each participant was met at least twice before fieldwork commenced.
4. One of the limitations of the research method was the difficulty in including perspectives from migrants with poor verbal English, or who did not feel confident learning new technologies, in particular the elder Pakistani community in the area. We addressed this in part by conducting one individual interview (female) and two group interviews (male) with this resident group.

5. We note some variations to this general categorisation. Some outdoor places tend to have more intentional visiting and less chance of incidental encounter, for example allotments or adventure playgrounds. Some indoor areas have high physical and visible permeability, for example, shopping malls may include people lingering and passing through for different reasons.

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PLACE ATTACHMENT AND MEMORY: LANDSCAPES OF BELONGING AS EXPERIENCED POST-MIGRATION.

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of public spaces in developing emotions of place attachment by first generation migrants. We look at the role of memory, of both continuity and dislocation prompted by everyday experiences of local places among residents who had moved to the UK from a range of non-European countries. The research was focused on a neighbourhood in Sheffield, with participants producing on-site independently recorded audio to communicate their responses to being outdoors. Our findings indicate the scope of outdoor places to prompt memories and highlight connections between different periods of the participants' lives. Performance of familiar activities and reflections of values in public spaces were important in developing a sense of belonging at the local scale. A sense of 'personal fit' to places of residence can reflect transnational identities and sense of continuity over different life stages.

Key words: migrants, ethnicity, landscape perception, public realm, walking methods.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to address the role of memory in development of place attachment among first generation migrants. We focus on three key research questions. First, how are aspects of the everyday local environment perceived as familiar or strange, especially in the initial stages of settling in a new country? Second, what forms of remembering are engaged through the embodied qualities of using outdoor places? Third, how are emotive dimensions of 'place attachment', senses of belonging or alienation, developed through experience of different places at a neighbourhood and city scale?

Experiences of landscapes are shaped in part by memories accumulated through everyday experiences, and longer memories of childhood, places left behind, sensory qualities lost. Childhood locations are seen to be of particular personal significance, and many studies demonstrate how these influence landscape preferences later in life (Ward Thompson et al, 2008; Cooper Marcus, 1992). But is this significance broken if people move to locations which are very different to those of their upbringing? This paper highlights the situation of first generation migrants, who have journeyed away from landscapes of their earlier years, and where distance and time combine to interrupt continuity of connection with any specific place. How do new arrivals experience and respond to unfamiliarity in typologies, visual qualities, social practices of public spaces?

We focus on the everyday qualities of life of first generation migrants living in the UK¹. This reflects a growing body of social geography research that examines the everyday life experiences of individuals, and the role of actions, reactions and interactions in local neighbourhoods. While individual identities may be increasingly transnational, especially for people with active relational links to other countries, this does not negate the role of the local (Gustafson, 2001; Armstrong, 2004). Indeed, in addressing forms of remembering, we explore how the deterritorialised nature of identity, (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga, 2003; Hannerz, 1992) is embodied and located in everyday practice and experience. We approach these debates from a disciplinary context of landscape architecture, which pays particular attention to the importance and use of designed public spaces. The interrelationship of people and place has been studied in various academic fields, but many traditional social science methods, quantitative but also qualitative, marginalise the experiential, temporal and sensory qualities of place.

The complexity of micro-landscape experiences, and the embodied nature of contact with locations – social encounters, weather, feelings of fear, long views – are often diminished by research that relies primarily on indoor interviews, or records responses to photographs. We developed a walking audio methodology designed to elicit the embodied experiences of research participants in the public realm, and focused on the emotive social dimensions of how outdoor places are encountered (Manzo, 2005). The method aimed to access tangible reflections of

place experiences through the ‘inner dialogues’ of personal response, in particular to investigate interactions of past and present perspectives of everyday experiences among first generation migrants.

Transnational identities, how people and communities establish wide ranging connections across different cultures and geographic locations, have been interrogated in many ways, and it is important to clearly define our intended focus within this vast field (Collins, 2009, Dorrian and Rose, 2003). While recognising that social networks, language skills, employment and legal status all play a vital role in shaping patterns of settlement within a new country (Barnes, 2001, Kershen, 2004), it is useful to also address emotional geographies which shape affiliation across different scales. By addressing migration identities and memory through the lens of experiential qualities of local places, at both a neighbourhood and city scale, we hope to deepen understandings of how these contribute to a personal sense of belonging (Armstrong, 2004; Sandercock, 2003a). Though the research connects with participants for a discrete period of time within their personal histories, we contribute to theories of place attachment as a temporal process, one which acknowledges and potentially reflects ongoing change in the experiences of individuals.

PLACE ATTACHMENT AND NARRATIVES OF MIGRATION

‘Place attachment’ is a term that seeks to illuminate emotional, symbolic and affective dimensions of people’s thinking and feeling for places (Altman and Low, 1992). It suggests not only an immediate sensory response, as might be described by the term ‘place experience’, but a deeper reflective resonance with specific locations. Temporal aspects of place attachment have received critical attention; for example addressing childhood memories (Cooper Marcus, 1992), older generations (Becker, 2003) and migrant communities (Low et al, 2002). Gustafson (2001) explores qualities of rootedness and enduring connection, both among people who have moved and those that have stayed in the same locality over the lifecourse. Connection and transition is critiqued in Relph (1976) who described dynamics of insideness / outsideness, providing a framework for addressing experiences of place as relational, and asserting a social positioning within conceptualisations of community. Increasingly, a predominant focus on landscapes

with positive meanings or favourite places (Brierley Newell, 1997) is complemented by debates of negative representations and detachment (Manzo, 2005). A context of increased global residential mobility can highlight these themes, and frames timely questions regarding the connection between emotions of belonging and length of residence, the interactions of short and long term memories of landscapes in developing place attachment, and the social context of experiencing the public realm as a member of a minority ethnic community.

‘Place attachment’ is a term that seeks to illuminate emotional, symbolic and affective dimensions of people’s thinking and feeling for places (Altman and Low, 1992). It suggests not only an immediate sensory response, as might be described by the term ‘place experience’, but a deeper reflective resonance with specific locations. Scannell and Gifford (2010) developed an organising framework for critiquing place attachment through dimensions of person, (psychological) process and place. The person dimension relates to individual connections with a place: childhood memories (Cooper Marcus, 1992), generational change (Becker, 2003) and experiences of personal growth, both positive and negative (Manzo, 2005). The second dimension focuses on psychological processes emotionally or cognitively. “Memories, beliefs, meaning and knowledge... associated with their central settings make them personally important” (Scannell and Gifford, p.3), and can stem from the complex life worlds of people from migrant communities (Low et al, 2002). Gustafson (2001) explores qualities of rootedness and enduring connection, both among people who have moved and those that have stayed in the same locality over the lifecourse. Scannell and Gifford (2010) discuss the importance for individuals to be able to draw similarities between themselves and the place that they are in, a concept that raises important challenges for newly migrated residents. Territorial behaviours and the creativity of making adaptations can be seen as one means of strengthening this link. The place dimension is concerned with social aspects of place at different scales. Connection and transition is critiqued in Relph (1976) who described dynamics of insideness / outsideness, providing a framework for addressing experiences of place as relational, and asserting a social positioning within conceptualisations of community. A context of increased global residential mobility can highlight these themes, and frames timely questions regarding the connection between emotions

of belonging and length of residence, the interactions of short and long term memories of landscapes in developing place attachment, and the social context of experiencing the public realm as a member of a minority ethnic community.

We locate our research within extended work which addresses the interactions of experiences of place and phenomenological approaches, and the creative role of individual affect to invest spaces with significance. “*Landscape is performed in a process of flows, where combinations of memory, action and meaning are complex and performed together*” suggest Dorrian and Rose (2003, p.254), echoing Ingold’s premise of dwelling within landscape (Ingold, 2000). A transactional model of landscape (Tuan, 1979; Thwaites and Simpkins, 2007, p.30) emphasises the interlinking between activity of people and the meaning invested in a place. It is the centrality of bodily habits and skills (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) to our encounter with ‘real places’ that can be critically absent from approaches often evidenced within environmental psychology, where quantified responses to remote images reduce responses to place to merely ‘scenographic’ dimensions (Howett, 1993). The methodology developed within this research project also seeks to attend to the lived experiences of people with diverse axes of identities, “re-presenting the subjects’ own understanding of their world” (Alexander, 2006, p.400). In particular, we examine the layering of expectations and actualities, of embodied space as the “simultaneity of stories-so-far” (Massey, 2005, p.9).

The first two research questions, addressing the strangeness of landscape to newly arrived migrants, and the means by which connections between different places are evoked, are specifically concerned with aspects of memory connected with landscape experience. Landscapes have an experienced representational value, standing as reminders of past places, people, or cultural values (O’Brien, 2006; Altman and Low, 1992; Toila-Kelly, 2004). This may be a simple visual trigger which prompts recognition; we refer to this as mnemonic memory. We also address embodied memories – which engage with the full sensory immersive qualities of place in a way that could not be simply represented in a photograph – and performative dimensions of memory, where the physical act of ‘doing’ is integral in making connections. The significance of evoking of memory within place experience is well served by the ‘stories-so-far’ phrase, a hint not only of

nostalgia, a looking back, but a continuing resourceful process. Boym (2001) discusses nostalgia as both 'restorative', a rebuilding of a past, and 'reflective', yearning which embraces remembrance but engages creatively with an ongoing emotional experience that is shaped by temporal layers of memory. It is this latter quality that we suggest is most likely to reflect landscape experience, uniting temporal qualities both of place change and individual comings and goings.

While the focus of this paper is on individual narratives of place and memory as related to personal histories of migration, it is helpful to contextualise this within previous research which has explored interactions between migrant communities and neighbourhood spaces. These often reveal cultural values and practices that both persist and are adapted within new locations, and contribute to processes of transformation within the urban environment (Sandercock, 2003a; Low, 2000; Armstrong, 2004). The development and activity within community gardens is one exemplar of the enactment of memory on the fabric of the city. In Winterbottom's descriptions of the *Casitas* created by the Puerto Rican community in New York, the gardens served as a focus of collective cultural performance in seasonal rituals of celebrations, allowed the everyday practice of cultivation (and passing of these techniques between generations), and provided spaces of personal reflection and communication of cultural heritage (Winterbottom, 1998).

Mostly though, first generation migrants respond to the existing found landscape, the residential neighbourhoods of arrival and settlement. Sites of cultural significance are more often buildings (commonly places of worship, consumption and retail; Cozen, 1990) and of small scale temporary adaption to the urban streetscape, of how activity is accommodated. Increasingly, these are characterised not by the dominance of one particular national or ethnic group, but by the perceptions, intentions and interactions of super-diverse populations (Vertovec, 2007). This spatial dynamic is reflected both in the chosen location of this research and in the decision to include participants from a range of countries of origin. Our third research question addresses emotional geographies of place in the context of first generation migrant communities; asking how senses of belonging and of inclusion are vital in informing place based identities. Olwig (1998) discusses the concept of 'home' as a relational quality of inclusion and exclusion,

and these framings can also apply to outdoor landscapes (Sandercock, 2000, Barnes, 2001, Peleman, 2003, Ehrkamp, 2005). Peleman, in her research with Moroccan women in Antwerp, focuses on the theme of territoriality as enacted by both gender and religion, emphasising the potential deterrents to public movement resulting from experience of racism and judgement from both within and without of the woman's own ethnic community (Peleman, 2003). There is some evidence to suggest that gaining confidence in using shared public landscapes can also increase confidence and enhance feelings of legitimacy and security. Among the Turkish immigrant community in Duisberg, Germany, Ehrkamp (2005) found that concepts of belonging were significantly located at the neighbourhood scale, creating a place based identity with integral transnational dimensions. This scale of attachment was grounded in the everyday landscapes of teahouses, mosques and the potential of community with people of similar cultural backgrounds (though set against a more negative experience of discrimination in less cosmopolitan areas of the city).

Ehrkamp's research touches on a theme which is developed in this paper, that of the urban landscape as reflecting aspects of transnational identities. In particular, how is this experienced at different scales, from the detail of sensory engagement to the sweep of an urban or rural vista. Rishbeth and Finney (2006), describing perceptions of public open space by refugees in the UK, highlight the emotional impact of recognising plants and natural patterns within natural and semi-natural landscapes; however little is known about how these serendipitous recognitions may be formed and reformed within the daily movements of more urban streetscapes. Buchecker's discussion of spatial alienation (Buchecker, 2009) suggests that withdrawal from public spaces can also be due to the lack of positive place identification, and the need to understand both social and individual identifications with place (p.294). It is this everyday engagement of place and memory that we focus on in this paper, the role of the local and near local environments in shaping place attachment or detachment in new countries of residence.

METHODOLOGY: THE WALKING VOICES PROJECT

Our methodological approach was shaped by two key objectives:

First, to enable expression of the holistic nature of landscape experience across diverse and mundane urban spaces. Perceptions of place change over time: through the dynamic of personal movement, through daily and seasonal change and as people change over the years. Building on Sandercock's emphasis of 'a multiplicity of stories' (Sandercock, 2003b), we emphasise the role of the researcher as enabling both spontaneous accounts and reflective responses of participants' engagement with the specific places they encounter in their daily lives. We achieved this by developing narrative methods, and ensuring that the majority of the data was produced in the immediacy of the outdoors, rather than through the filtered recollections of an indoor interview (Scott et al, 2009; Finney and Rishbeth, 2006). Walking and thinking have historical precedents within philosophical practice: the deambulation, the *dérive*, and more recently within psychogeography (Careri, 2002; Solnit, 2002; Sinclair, 2003), but within our research movement was conceived not as an artistic or adventurous project, but as an everyday action through (mostly) known places.

Second, to focus on individuals whose life has been characterised by moving from one country to another. Rather than reiterate a common 'ethnic lens' in migration research (Schiller and Çağlar, 2009), which can emphasise bounded ethnic identities, we worked with participants from a range of national and cultural backgrounds but all living in the same neighbourhood. This allowed us to critique the impact of migration on attachment to new places of residence across diverse factors of individual circumstances.

The Walking Voices project involved eleven participants who each recorded independent on-site commentaries of their local area over a period of three months. BBC Radio Sheffield were key collaborators: participants were given training in using minidisk recorders at the BBC premises, and one of the products of the research was to create extracts for local radio programmes as a means of community dissemination. Below we set out the sampling strategy and participant profiles, description of neighbourhood, key fieldwork undertaken, analytical process and a reflection on the strengths and limitations of our approach.

Sampling strategy

We conducted a broad ethnographic process in which researchers spent four months in the neighbourhood: contacting community based social and religious organisations, spending time in public places and taking part in activities such as Healthy Walks, lunch meetings and exercise groups. We discussed the Walking Voices project with over seventy organisations and individuals, including chatting to people in parks and on the street, and through this discursive process gradually recruited participants who were interested in taking part and met our key criteria: born and grew up in a different country, live in Burngreave and had reasonable spoken English.

Key motivating factors for participation were curiosity in using the audio recording technology and the link with BBC Radio Sheffield, and general interest in the research theme. There were six men, five women, most of whom had living in the UK for five to ten years. The participants' countries of origin were The Yemen, Iraq, Jamaica, Pakistan and Somalia². The participants represented a diverse range of life choices and responsibilities: parents and grandparents and single people, employed and not in work, planning to move, to stay or to return to their country of origin. The youngest was in his early twenties and the eldest over sixty.

Neighbourhood

Given the focus on this research on description of place, it is important to give some overview of the neighbourhood, Burngreave, and the rationale for choosing this locality. One of the areas of Sheffield most characterised by ethnic diversity, both established first and second generation communities, and recent arrivals, it is a useful case study for looking at the interaction of superdiverse communities with their urban location. The 2001 census categorises the predominant population groups as White (56%), Pakistani (19%), Caribbean (6%) and African (5%); with 48% of homes defined by two or more aspects of disadvantage (education, health, employment and housing quality (Office of National Statistics, 2001). Burngreave is a twenty minute walk from the city centre, and has a range of housing types, many in the private rented sector. It has limited public open space: a small Victorian park, a large cemetery, and a scattering of small municipal 'greenspaces'

characterised by mown grass and standard trees. One of these is a small triangle which might loosely be termed the centre of Burngreave, surrounded by roads but busy due to the presence of bus stops, the mosque, local shops and a recently restored community hall.

Fieldwork activities and data

We designed the research activity to be one that participants found to be engaging, of intrinsic benefit or interest to them, and a means by which they could both direct and reflect on their own contribution (Finney and Rishbeth, 2006). The participants were loaned mini-disk recorders and asked to record regular on-site commentaries while out and about. They were briefed to talk while going about their daily routines, commenting on what they saw or felt, or any thoughts triggered by their surroundings. There was no specific instruction to include reflections on their country of origin, though through discussing the project they were aware of the overall research area. In order to reflect as closely as possible normal activities and meandering thoughts, individuals made recordings whenever convenient for them and unprompted, with researchers absent from the recording process. The Walking Voices project was undertaken over a period spanning late summer to early winter, allowing representation of seasonal qualities of place. We found it was important to adapt the method to suit the different circumstances and commitments of the participants. Though half the participants made reasonably regular independent recordings, others found it difficult to remember, or were embarrassed, and in these cases a researcher ‘walked alongside’, aiming to take a listening rather than an interviewing role as far as possible³. As participants became more confident with the process they became more relaxed; we were encouraged by the length of the commentaries, and by initiatives taken to record in a range of locations.

Analysis and dissemination

The project gathered over fifty recordings with an average length of thirty minutes each which were transcribed, coded and analysed using N.Vivo software. The distribution is shown in table 1. Emerging findings were discussed with participants, where possible in a final overview interview, and were critiqued alongside researcher fieldnotes and discussions with contacts made during the

scoping phase of the research. Creating community dissemination routes was important in recognising the significant efforts and achievements of the participants. The research was showcased in a number of BBC Radio Sheffield programmes, production of a website with 23 audio clips (www.walkingvoices.group.shef.ac.uk), and a full colour briefing paper aimed at non-academic audiences. Consent for different outputs of the project, written and audio, was obtained in ongoing discussions with participants over the full period of the research.

Strengths and limitations

The ‘Walking Voices’ method was highly successful in generating qualitative data that was sequential and nuanced in describing qualities of place; combining immediate sensory responses and reflective connections with broader life issues. The action of “walking... inevitably leads to other subjects”, and, at best, evokes “a state in which mind, body and the world are aligned” (Solnit, 2002, p.8, *ibid*, p.5). Despite the awareness of the end uses for the recordings, we found the material generated to be imaginative and intimate, communicating fresh individual accounts of thought processes and responses. Although the intention was to explore perceptions of the urban environment through the walking experience, by including participant initiated recordings in locations such as allotments, an outdoor party, the nearby countryside and while driving, the data became more representative of the breadth of outdoor places valued by participants. The free agency of the participants to initiate and direct their own involvement – location, frequency, length and detail given of personal circumstances – stressed their positioning as experts and generators of their own creative material. We ceding some of the traditional powers of the researcher: in asking questions and standardising method, and would not claim the accounts are representative of any given ethnic group, gender or religious identity. We suggest this project compliments rather than replaces methodologies that offer breadth, or make more quantitative records of how outdoor places are used. But through this method we involved and retained people who would not normally take part in research projects, established trust over time so they felt able to offer candid accounts, and allowed the emphasis of the project to be informed by issues that were genuinely raised by the participants. We acknowledge the ultimate role of the researcher in

analysing themes across the contributors, and ultimately representing the research within academic debate.

FINDING FAMILIARITY, REMEMBERING THROUGH PLACE

We structure the findings of the paper in two parts. This section focuses on the role of comparisons made by participants between landscapes experienced in different stages of their lives. The sub-sections present results relating to the first and second research questions: the role of public spaces in highlighting senses of recognition and familiarity, and the importance of landscape experience as a form of remembering intrinsic to experience of place.

In the following section, ‘Place Attachment and time passing’, we attend to the third research question: how the recordings deepen understandings of place attachment. The importance of time passing is found to be integral to the relationship between local and transnational identities, encompassing past expectations of an imagined future, and ongoing generation of memories within known landscapes.

Recollection and normality

The first research question focused on how first generation migrants make connections between the places they now live in, and the places familiar to them from their earlier life in other countries. How are memories prompted by new surroundings? What can appear or be construed as familiar, and how do people value making these connections? Through the immediacy of the audio recordings, it was possible to interrogate the different significances of visual similarity, social contexts, actions and sensory triggers.

Places, views or objects which reminded participants of home re-occurred within the recordings. In one of her walks, Thelma (originally from Jamaica) pauses to look out over a view of Sheffield city centre.

“The city I can see... is it Park Hill? Looks like Park Hill, a horrible looking building that needs demolishing! And some other apartments, is that Woodside?”

Yeah that looks like Woodside, and that looks like the tram line after you pass Castle College, right.

This view reminds me of back home, not far from where we used to live, a place called Red Hills, when you go up to the top and look down on the city and you see right across the city straight out to sea, and you see the hotels and all the lovely buildings, everything, all the nice houses, all around, especially in the night, when the lights are on, oh it's gorgeous! And this view reminds me of being, on top of the hills and looking across the city."

It is important to note a seeming overlap but vital difference between visual similarity, emotional engagement and mnemonic value. The view over the city is a visual prompt, and Thelma identifies Sheffield landmarks by sight. But though she states that it reminds her of 'back home' she goes on to describing very different landmarks in her home city in Jamaica. The key to this possible contradiction lies in the phrase 'reminds me of being...'. Thelma does not think that Sheffield is identical to Red Hills, but the action and emotional resonance of looking out and over a city is triggered by this view. Looking is not a disengaged visual act, but an embodied one which engages with resonances of memory and meaning.

Our research implies the ease in which people respond to archetypes of built and natural form. In the case of people displaced from their normal situation – migrants, travellers, even holiday makers – there is an ongoing imaginative identification of that which is seen to that which is already known. In this project, we found it most strongly expressed when the participants were describing visits to rural areas. Young men from the Yemen enjoyed travelling out to the surrounding countryside because it reminded them of the villages they grew up in. Khaled from Iraq found the seaside at Bridlington familiar, despite differences in some qualities, prompting possibly idealised memories of past experiences and places (Tonkin, 1992).

"When I saw many people on the sea, I thought oh my god this is like my country. Where we do have water but this is dirty, really dirty... It's not that same because it's really dirty. It's like – but in our country it's blue and the sky is always blue".

These archetypes and references were less sweeping when in urban contexts, and tended to be found on a smaller scale, in glimpses of normality and recognition. Natural objects and patterns were important. One participant described his joy at seeing the moon, another talked about plants and working on their allotment using tools bought with them from the Caribbean. Shops selling culturally specific food were important markers that this place was 'like home'. The urban landscape in the broader sense of built character was often cited as being different and unfamiliar, with a number of participants recounting the difficulties of orientation when they first arrived, as the rows of Victorian terraces all looked the same to them.

Embodied experiences and social connections

In addressing prompts to recollection, our research found that the sensations of movement and being outdoors were important in establishing connections between lifestyles in the countries of origin and residence. One way in which Mahmud relaxes is by driving along motorways in the UK. He compares the road between Sheffield and Manchester (over a hill range) with roads in Yemen and describes the combination of visual impact and the physicality of driving.

"Especially the turning areas, going like snake, the curves, the turnings and the bends, the scenery, it's spectacular..."

The sensory qualities and skills of driving that Mahmud enjoys are also described by him as part of his identity, that of being "a driver", that bridges his residential situation. *"Unless you driver you won't understand it, you have to be a driver to understand it"*. Through the act of driving and establishing himself as 'a driver' Mahmud has found an area of commonality which is more important than a chance resemblance between two landscapes. It allows him to express something that he feels differentiates himself from others: *"I know most people they hate driving"*. The performative dimension of memory was something that many participants described, and was often important in social occasions. A recording by Lola, at a garden party in Manchester, describes dancing, singing and socialising as a key expression of her identity as a Christian Jamaican woman.

“I am here in Moss Side in a garden party, it’s a gospel overtone. The person whose birthday it is, that person is a Christian so the songs they sing is based on Christianity. The quality of people here and the songs that they sing reminds me of the songs I grew with in the Caribbean and the old time gospel old songs and it’s just lovely listening, you know the crowd, everybody is drinking and me, I am just dancing man and you know it’s great!”

The importance of bodily sensations and sound create an emotion of belonging and an expression of her spirituality. The garden itself is fairly anonymous, but is a context that provided her with a sense of being part of a collective celebration. For one of the older men who moved to Britain from The Yemen a few decades ago, it is the affordances of the landscape that are important. He meets with his male friends on a daily basis at the park benches on the park outside the mosque. The park is valued for its role as a social stage, and the chance to *“socialise like you socialise back home. Place where everyone meets and everybody sits down, have a talk”*. For this man, the relevance of the location is not specifically linked to the sensory qualities of being outdoors, but serves to affirm norms of Yemini culture in which the public realm is important as a male gathering place, separate from the domestic female space.

For all the participants, connecting with aspects of their country of origin within the outdoors required imaginative leaps and attitudes of adaptation. The disconnects of place can take time to overcome, to find ways of continuing practices that are of personal importance in landscapes and cultural contexts that are different. The youth leader who tried to go camping in the Peak District was surprised to find that it was not permissible simply to pitch a tent wherever he desired, as he used to in The Yemen. John had to be innovative in adapting cultivations methods learnt in the Caribbean to be successful in growing vegetables in European climate and conditions. Thelma could no longer walk on the beach when she felt stressed, but eventually discovered places in the Peak District where she could relax. *“So I took up walking... there was no sea for me to go to”*. The participants often volunteered these points of difference, and spoke with a matter of pride as to how they have overcome initial problems.

The process of adapting to an often different physical, ecological and social landscape highlights the contrast between the new and old places of residence. Sometimes, these changes can be neutral in their impact, or welcomed. At other times, the necessity of adjustment highlighted personal values that had previously been unconsidered. Especially when walking in rural areas, Thelma was mindful of qualities of friendliness. Greeting people was important to her, and she missed the importance given to the manners in Jamaica. Burngreave was sometimes compared unfavourably with the countries of origin in terms of weaker social communities and the degradation of the public realm. For some participants, being clear about this difference was an important component of their sense of personal identity and affiliations with their cultural heritage.

PLACE ATTACHMENT AND TIME PASSING

Attachment to place is an emotive response that is temporally as well as spatially defined. During the months of the research project, we engaged with a specific time and place in the life histories of the participants, and from their recordings we gleaned their perspectives on past and future movements or settlement. Though one key point of reference was the country of origin, this cannot be assumed to be a simple change between 'before' and 'after'. Sometimes the movement between a country of origin and the UK is a decisive single journey, for others it may be characterised by differing periods of time living in the two countries or a journey that took many years. For all of our participants, 'the past' included recent years spent in the UK. In analysis of the research data, it became apparent that theories of migration and place attachment need to encompass a flexible understanding of past and present landscapes, one which allows for ongoing development of transnational identities and a 'multiplicity of trajectories' (Massey, 2005, p.55) at a range of national and local scales.

In order to reference current responses to landscape with intersections of personal history, two of the participants' stories are illustrated in more detail.

Thelma was born in Jamaica and lived there until her mid-twenties, when she migrated to the UK with her young son. At the start of the Walking Voices project she had lived in the UK seven years, initially in a housing estate to the southern

edge of Sheffield, and then to Burngreave. She rents her house in Burngreave, has become involved in a range of community initiatives and works part time in the charity sector. She has ambitions to buy a house, and in the long term she would like to live in the countryside near Sheffield.

Khaled is a Kurdish man in his early twenties. In his early life he moved a number of times with his family between Iraq and Iran. When he was eighteen he left the Middle East and started a five year journey seeking asylum, living in Turkey and then western European countries, eventually arriving in the UK. Under the dispersal system he was first moved to Newcastle, and then to Sheffield. He has 'status to remain', and after living in Burngreave for a short while he was taken in by a white British family in Hillsborough, a predominately white, working-class area of Sheffield.

Citing the recordings made by Thelma and Khaled as key examples, and with reference to the other participants, we present an interpretation of how the context of their migration process frames their responses to the local landscape. This is examined by breaking discussion of perception of place into discrete but interrelated phases. First, initial reactions to the country of migration. Secondly, aspects of 'dual vision' with regard to landscape in continuing patterns of living in settled or relatively settled migrants. It is important to acknowledge that, given the relatively short duration of the project and the participant group involved, the first of these categories are only accessible to us through hindsight accounts.

The participants' discussions of their reactions to the UK on first arrival supports biographical memoirs which often describe aspects of physical and emotional disorientations embedded in reaction to place (Sandhu, 2003; Grouev, 2000). The first week, month and year of living in a new environment are sharpened by the juxtaposition, not only between the country of leaving and the country of arrival, but the expectation of place formed prior to the journey. Thelma's references to when she first arrived highlight a sense of strangeness: the repetitive nature of the residential streetscape, the seasonal qualities of deciduous trees and bareness when the leaves have fallen, the gloom of the winter days. In choosing these images to discuss her experiences of this time in her life, Thelma expresses qualities of

landscape that reflect something of her emotional state at the time: feeling isolated and missing the sense of familiarity and community from her hometown in Jamaica. Piecing together her memories of this period is an act of narration, of communicating a connection between her new situation and qualities of displacement.

By the time Khaled arrived in the UK he had already spent time in a number of European countries, and though he mentions some aspects of novelty in the landscape, his accounts focused on aspects of personal security and his positive experiences with the English police. However, of all the participants he was most critical of the Burngreave neighbourhood, "*This is not my kind of England places*". Khaled was mostly positive about his move to England, but at the local scale he associated Burngreave with crime, poor housing, and the presence of the refugee Kurdish community.

Khaled's expectations of England were disappointed, and his experiences of place were shaped by this comparison between anticipation and reality. The absence of local place attachment was not shaped by a desire to return to Iraq, but for the unrealised dream of an idealised 'England place'. His ongoing experiences of places in Britain - socialising with his Kurdish friends in Burngreave, new activities in the social setting of Hillsborough, and events such as the seaside visit - also had an impact on his memory of previous places. Memories of place can be heightened or assigned new relevance, reshaping a narrative which can promote idealised memories of past experiences and places (Tonkin, 1992). Equally, Thelma had an ideal of rural living which she formed in Jamaica and re-interpreted through her explorations of the countryside near Sheffield. But ultimately her experience of feeling unwelcome while walking in such places led her to give higher value to the friendliness and multicultural community she found in Burngreave. Place attachment is shaped not just by memories of specific locations, but by emotional responses to expected and imagined places.

The majority of our participants had lived in UK for a number of years, so our methodology was best placed to explore ongoing responses and negotiations of place past the initial experience of culture shock. How does the accumulation of an

individual's experiences in a new country aid a process of settlement, and how do these prompted memories affirm place attachment to specific locations?

John, a man born in Jamaica who has lived in England since the mid 1960s, demonstrated aspects of time passing. Here, he is walking with one on the research team through Burngreave Cemetery.

"We can walk down here... I can remember we were... sixteen and we become friends and go out on Saturday night, Friday night. And so it happens there's only two of us what left, you know, who is alive today and there is four of them died... [more details]

I can remember years ago there used to be a club called Shades, and sometimes all six of us would go and get all tanked up and have a good night out. We walking home two, three o'clock in the morning we laughing and joking and we would just laugh, just laugh and I tend to think to myself sometimes when I am walking through here, I could feel like the sensation of all six of us walking and laughing – but I am on my own".

John remembers himself as a younger man, and can identify important changes in his life since these earlier days, in this case, friends who have since died. His discussion indicates connections between place (the club, the walk home) and reliving memories that affirm the importance of this community of friends. The physical location helps John express his own sense of continuity with the past, evoking the spirit and the sensation of walking and laughing. Because of the length of time John has lived in Burngreave, the mnemonic value of place is less related to his earlier childhood experiences in Jamaica, and more to the past histories of these places as they have featured in his life since migration.

John's memories also reflect a shift in his circumstances in life, from being a teenager to being an adult. He talked about the role that the cemetery now plays in his life, a place for peace and quiet, so '*my thoughts go better*'. As he has grown older, his priorities and lifestyle have changed. The majority of our participants migrated to the UK in their early adult lives, and so the gradual shift from childhood to adulthood was also marked by a more abrupt change in country of

residence. How is the combination of these changes in circumstance marked in migrants' perceptions of place?

Shami came to the UK from Pakistan seven years ago to work as a nurse, subsequently married (another nurse from Pakistan) and has a young child. They have recently bought a house. Shami's recordings demonstrated a great wealth of detail about the function and opportunities of her neighbourhood, in particular the best places for shopping, and resources for caring for her daughter. In the interview marking the end of the fieldwork period, and in the context of Shami planning a visit to her parents in Karachi, the researcher asked her when she visits Pakistan, how does she feel about coming back?

"No, I'm glad to come back here, you know, like you know like it's more time here now, so I'm used to, I look like I'm born here now.

So I'm more here, so it's like I miss this place too much. I miss because daily activities are here now, like that's my house and I'm living this area, or I can shopping to Netto, it's so different but back home you are not going for shopping, you know household, it's like everybody else is doing it".

We suggest that Shami represents the everyday activities out and about in her home neighbourhood as facets of her own sense of independence and established belonging. She emphasises the extent of time spent here, and links this to being seen by others as an insider, a citizen. Her identity as responsible for her family is embodied by this location, and is diminished when she visits her parents and has to fit in around their activities. For Shami, living in this part of Sheffield, and her sense of belonging here, is synonymous with being an adult, rather than her parent's daughter.

The passing of time is embodied in personal experiences of landscape: through the marking of seasons, in growing familiarity, in the accumulation of memories connected with a given location, in acknowledgement that perceptions and affordances of a place change as one becomes older and has different responsibilities. These shifts in the ambiguous connections between people and place can echo, and are sometimes chosen to represent, those between different

national and cultural identities of first generation migrants. In particular, developing insider knowledge of places can provide a sense of establishment, tangible markers that represent a break from newcomer status.

Our research implies that during the initial period post migration, place attachment will most likely be characterised by comparisons between the country of residence and the country just left, and be shaped by either a jarring or a fit with expectations prior to arrival. As time passes, though some comparisons endure and prompt nostalgic emotions, personal changes in both age and experiences play an important role with regard to how neighbourhood places are experienced. Central to this change in personal perspectives is considering how such arrivals 'learn to be local' (Wilk, 1995). Many first generation migrants eventually find aspects of continuity in how they use or experience new landscapes. Combined with developing recent memories of place, this can support a sense of belonging and legitimacy, especially at a local scale.

CONCLUSIONS

Landscapes provide a mediation between the representational and the non-representational (Dorrian and Rose, 2003, p.17). Through the individual voices of the participants we have demonstrated how experiential qualities of place prompt emotional responses and provide a reflective insight into aspects of connection, similarity and difference. How do these help inform theories of place attachment, the symbolic, representational, affective ways in which people respond to places that they know? In this concluding section we address the interrelationship raised by the three leading questions of this paper: finding familiarity, the role of memory in experiential and temporal qualities of place, and development of attachment to place.

The methodology of the Walking Voices project allowed connections to be made between immediate experiences and reflective thought processes in the lives of first generation migrants, contributing to understandings of both place attachment and the located nature of transnational identities. The self-directed audio recordings whispered, muttered and postured unusual turns of thought and phrase, memory leaps between past and present which prompted the listener to experience

the urban landscape in different ways. As a research method, the lack of standardisation (compared to more traditional methodologies) led to vivid reflections on fluidity of place experience and the challenge of researching between the particular and the universal. We believe these dynamics, and the shifting of (some) power to the research participants, played an important role in the enquiry and contribution of the research.

Participants used descriptors of locations such as being ‘just like the Yemen’, or ‘reminds me of back home’, as a shorthand for describing an experienced emotional connectivity that acted either to affiliate or disassociate an individual to place in the present. In the audio commentary dynamic of communicating to the research team, who they knew to be unfamiliar with the countries of origin, the participants identified that which is important to them to remember and retell about these places. The use of memory here is as a reflective, creative process (Boym, 2001). There is a tacit understanding that this is not a statement of visual identical matching (though there may be resonances of similarity), but an acknowledgement of archetypal patterns: social (men gathering outside the mosque), historic (clusters of villages in a rural landscape), cultural (responding to music, plants, children’s play) or emotional (long views, seeing the moon, peace and quiet). By talking about the tangible, we glimpse something of the intangible: values, resonances, aspirations.

These memory-nudged responses mostly appear to strengthen attachments to the current place of residence, and support connections between different periods of the participants’ lives. They shape a sense of belonging, which allows individuals who are comparatively new to the area to develop feelings of rootedness. Whereas more traditional definitions of place attachment imply strengthening of attachment as connected to longevity of knowing and insider status (Altman and Low, 1992), the findings of this research suggest that personal meanings contribute to affective bonds between people and place. Length of residence may be one factor to identifying as belonging at a local scale, but there are also threads of life history which weave a more complex pattern of experiential knowledge and dimensions of dwelling (Ingold, 2000). Memories prompted by place can give a sometimes fleeting sense of familiarity, but these findings suggests a deeper dynamic at work.

Memory appears to have a role in supporting an ongoing recognition and working out of how one might belong in a new place. Experiences of remembering landscapes can sometimes exacerbate the negative shock of the new, but can also be a restorative means of envisaging how everyday life continues beyond the strangeness.

It is important also to recognise ambiguity inherent in attachments to place, that dissociation can be experienced simultaneous to attraction. This paper has discussed some of aspects that relate to feeling ‘out of place’ on first arriving in a new country. Some of these qualities will persist, creating an ongoing disjunction between individual preferences and aspirations, and the current situation. There will be dimensions of loss and broken connections, habits of being outside which are not possible to recreate or adapt. These can be general (the social courtesies in Jamaican society) or specific (the colour of the sea, the sharpness of the stars, knowing the names of plants), and can inform an idealised notion of past places in a form of restorative nostalgia (Boym, 2001; Tonkin, 1992). Equally, some losses will be allied to circumstances of disadvantage experienced by migrant communities if living in areas of multiple deprivation. Lack of affective bonds to these places may also be informed by a desire not to stay in these neighbourhoods for long, but to move on to better economic and environmental conditions.

Place attachment is found not to be a passive response, a receiving of a view, but an embodiment of movement and choices. Though operating within a common range of constraints (responsibilities, expectations, requirements), the participants enacted decisions about where and why they travelled to and through different locations. The reflective quality of recordings allowed some insight into the connection between these choices and locations with their own sense of personal identity... *“to be a driver”*... *“I am just dancing”*... *“but I am on my own”*. This could be used to express continuity between different periods of the life, but also to establish points of new departure, such as Khaled’s decision to base himself at a distance to the main Kurdish community in Sheffield. To state that first generation migrants utilise outdoor places to shape and communicate their own cultural identities would claim a more instrumental and conscious approach than can be evidenced, but we suggest that in many cases an interweaving of ‘sense of self’

and ‘sense of belonging in place’ does seem to develop over time. An understanding of perceptions of the public realm by first generation migrant communities is important for professionals involved in urban regeneration, recognising the potential to enhance a sense of belonging and connection, and being aware of the implications of withdrawal or disassociation when public spaces are experienced as problematic (Buchecker, 2009). Implications for practice has not been a focus of this paper, but a briefing paper can be downloaded from the project website (www.walkingvoices.group.shef.ac.uk). Additional research is needed across a wider range of ethnic backgrounds and points of migration history to understand the implications of differing experiences of local place for the design and management of the public realm.

Our research found that role of memory in place attachment was not a simple enactment of nostalgia, but one form of creative process that aided engagement between the local and the transnational. Outdoor places both represented cultural identities and reshaped them, often helping establish notions of normality amid that which was initially strange. We recognised imaginative strategies of adaptation that allowed the practicalities of everyday rituals to change while reaffirming core values.

As well as continuity, these adaptations marked flux. The participants recounted difference not just between a country of origin and one of residence, but time passing from a point of arrival and reviewing of degrees of settlement. The immediacy of these accounts recorded by first generation migrants highlight some of the nuances and complexities of expectation, affiliation and memory that shape a sense of belonging and attachment to place.

ENDNOTES

1. We chose to use the term ‘migrant’ over ‘immigrant’ to avoid a perspective defined by positioning within the country of settlement. The term is used to define a person who has moved in the past, and is not intended to imply that they are temporary residents or in ongoing migration.
2. In this paper, we use the term ‘country of origin’ to refer to the place of primary residence during childhood.
3. Quotes which were recorded when a researcher was present are noted within the text.

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Everyday Places that Connect Disparate Homelands: Remembering through the City

Clare Rishbeth

“Oh this reminds me I must buy some dates. Everything you want you can find here. Do you have some money here? Oh no (laughs) I am always on credit here. They want to find some... big ones, they are good but the problem is the good ones. The big ones somewhere as well. I’ll go for these ones it’s £6.90. Like this you can pick this up in Arabia for £1.”

Mahmud from The Yemen

Understanding the diverse experiences of first generation migrants can provide a vital insight into connections between personal histories and place. How do the dynamics of displacement, arrival and acculturation shape landscape memory, support affiliations and highlight difference? That migrants adapt their private homes to reflect their cultural identities has been well documented (Boym, 2001), but less well understood is the shared negotiation of practice and preference in public space. By being outside, issues of visibility and performance take on primary importance, and can reflect gender, social status, religious and ethnic identities.

The potential for flash points of disaffection (for example in the UK the disturbances in northern cities, 2001¹), and an increasing fear of home based terrorism has intensified the political and policy debate about the challenges of multi-ethnic communities (Amin, 2002, Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007) and underlines the need for social science inquiry to inform practice. Sandercock’s ‘Cosmopolis II’ poses the question of how genuine integration and

engagement can be recognized in urban neighborhoods (Sandercock, 2003a, also Binnie et.al, 2006). Amin (2002) argues that the outdoor public realm is limited in its potential for meaningful sustained interaction, though Dines et al (2006), in their report on public space use in East London, found evidence of value given to serendipitous cross-cultural encounters and points for lingering.

The idea of a 'sense of place' being marked and defined by long-term resident's knowledge can be a pervasive one, and raises the question of how do new arrivals find their own way of belonging, or 'know their place' (Altman and Low, 1992, Armstrong, 2004). Equally, a political debate around citizenship and national affiliations needs to be informed by a deeper sociological understanding of how places that are initially unfamiliar can become identified as home and how outsiders become insiders (Hudson, Phillips, Ray, and Barnes, 2007). How might engaging in the public landscape increase personal and community confidence, and the development of customary knowledge?



Figure 1: Shami and her daughter.

Within professional fields of planning and design, there is need for a greater critical understanding of the diversity of ways in which residents from different cultural backgrounds conceptualize, value and use their locality. Landscape Architecture, both as an academic discipline and as profession, has much to add to

these debates; in particular contributing an understanding of the interactions between the materiality of place and social practices.

The Walking Voices Project

This chapter outlines the methods, findings and implications of a research project called Walking Voices located in Sheffield, UK. The overarching aim of the project was to investigate perceptions and values of local neighborhoods by first generation migrants. We developed an audio and walking research method, which would allow us to more deeply understand relationships between memories of participants' homelands and development or absence of place attachment to the adopted city. Through working with key participants, from different cultural backgrounds but all living in the same neighborhood, we explored diversity in patterns of use and affordances of the public realm. Ultimately we hope to inform design and planning practice in urban transcultural locations.²

The research process generated on-site accounts of participants walking and thinking. In focusing on the mundane practices of urban living, the Walking Voices project relates to an emergent body of research that employs innovative methodologies to address temporal, multi-sensory and embodied qualities of landscape (Butler, n.d.; Ingold and Vergunst, 2008). It is shaped by a belief that the detail of "social exchanges, memories, images and daily use of the material setting" is useful in understanding people place relationships (Low, 2000, p.128). It also responds to Sandercock's discussion of the 'multiplicity of stories' that recognizes the importance of connecting immediate experiences with personal meaningful resonances, and developing these as a means of sharpening theory and informing policy (Sandercock, 2003b, Sarissikon, 2005; Armstrong, 2004; Low, Taplin, Scheld, and Fisher, 2002).

Focusing on one urban neighborhood

The project was located in Burngreave, Sheffield, a large city (pop. 500,000) in the north of England. The neighborhood is characteristic of many British inner city urban areas in reflecting patterns of British migration over the last sixty years. In the years after the second world war, Britain needed overseas workers to work in

industry and in the health sector, these were actively recruited from countries within the former British Empire, especially Africa, the Caribbean and the Indian Subcontinent (Mason, 2000). In Burngreave a Yemeni community of steel workers was established in the 1950s, and it became a key housing area for Pakistanis and Indians from the 1970s onward. More recently, the UK's immigration pattern has changed, reflecting the expansion of the European Community, and the human impact of wars in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Many Eastern Europeans, most notably Polish, have taken advantage of reciprocal rights of work to move to the UK. Burngreave is also one of the main areas in Sheffield where asylum seekers are housed. Though the official record of ethnicities other than 'White British' in the UK is 9% of the national population (Office of National Statistics, 2001); in urban areas, especially those with low-grade housing, there is a significantly more diverse ethnic profile. The 2001 UK census categorizes the predominant population groups in the Burngreave ward as White (56%), Pakistani (19%), Caribbean (6%) and African (5%). Almost one quarter of Burngreave residents registered in the census were born overseas.

The housing is a mix of late nineteenth century terraces and housing estates built over the last four decades, with 48% of homes defined by two or more aspects of disadvantage (education, health, employment and housing quality (O.N.S., *ibid*). There are a few designated parks, but most of the green space is municipal mown grass around the housing blocks in the newer estates, and areas of shrub woodland that accommodate steeper slopes. At the time of the fieldwork a ten-year national funding initiative was running to improve social, economic and environmental aspects of the neighborhood ³.

Representing diverse experiences.

The methods used aimed to address some of the limitations in traditional qualitative research techniques, specifically when working with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. With the Walking Voices method, we chose to work with a few people over an extended period of time, so it was particularly important that the selection process of our key participants was rigorous, and that we were mindful of the demands and power relationship of the research process.

People living in areas of multiple deprivation are often ‘over-researched’ through a combination of academic and community planning initiatives. This can particularly affect people from ethnic community backgrounds who are regular users of cultural community centers. Recruiting solely through community centers can also introduce a bias towards the voices of people not in work and with strong links to their cultural heritage. During the first few months of the project we immersed ourselves as broadly as possible in the neighborhood, discussing the project themes with more than sixty contacts (individuals and organizations) in a wide range of locations: healthy walks, library users, allotments, places of worship, park users, shops, community centers and adult education.



Figure 2. Mahmud showing us his street.

From these contacts we recruited eleven participants who lived in or near Burngreave. The five women and six men came from five different countries of birth: The Yemen, Jamaica, Pakistan, Iraq and Somalia. They had a diverse range of life contexts: employed / not in work, large family / single person, strong community networks / relatively isolated, intention of returning to home country / long term settled in UK.⁴

Recording of on-site commentaries.

The participants were loaned mini-disk recorders for up to three months spanning late summer to early winter. Their brief was to regularly record on-site

commentaries during their everyday walks or journeys, talking about observations, thoughts and choices prompted by the changing scene. We worked in collaboration with BBC Radio Sheffield, with the aim that selected recordings would be broadcast, and participants received training from BBC staff.

The process of making the recordings varied greatly between participants. Some were largely independent and returned recordings regularly. A few required more support; we found that a researcher walking alongside them ('active listening' rather than interviewing) gave them more confidence. Most participants made recordings infrequently, but longer commentaries than expected, and in total we achieved an extended body of qualitative data (58 recordings, average length 30 minutes).

The ethnographic approach, where we were in contact with participants on a weekly or fortnightly basis over a period of months, allowed for trust to build between participants and researchers. Research topics could be gradually introduced, discussed and understood within the wider context of the participants' lives. Walking practices varied, in particular some of the male participants preferred to make recordings while in their cars as they did not often walk places. However, regular contact ensured a reflective loop for researchers to discuss emerging findings with participants. The majority of the recordings were produced while the researcher was absent, allowing the direction and priority of content to be decided by the participant. As such, we ceded some of the social scientists' traditional 'powers': the right to ask questions and to impose consistency of method.

Informing the research themes

"There used to be a river flowing out, but when I came you could hear the water. The river behind all these bushes and it sounded so lovely. I'm assuming it would be cold as well...I thought I heard a trickle of water. It doesn't look as lush. I mean there's a lot of bush and green and everything but it's not as lush. It's dried and portions of it are dried.... ahhh there's some people coming in front of us and it's very narrow....we'll make it somehow".

Thelma from Jamaica, walking in the countryside near Sheffield.

The content of the self-recorded commentaries were shaped by participants' own interests and daily practices, and provided accounts of place that often reflected sensory and experiential details. Many recordings took the form of extended monologues, and a number drifted from a reaction to the immediate situation (feeling cold, not very safe) to thoughts on their own migrant identity, childhood experiences and stories of their arrival in Britain. The descriptive and reflective qualities of the transcripts exceeded expectations, and provided an 'insider ear' to the emotional dimensions of migration and place. Aspects of cultural identity were mentioned, sometimes obliquely, and at other times related to the broader range of recordings. The life history interview was not part of the project, so our understanding of participants' backgrounds was dependent on whether participants volunteered this information. By using on-site moving recordings we supported multi-sensory descriptions that responded instinctively to the unpredictable changing characteristics of specific places (visual, social, weather-related, physicality of walking).

The task of 'talking to yourself' maintained an internal dialogue of perceptions, value judgments and triggered memories and ideas, and seemed to be significantly different in character to descriptions of landscape in indoor interview settings (Scott, Carter, Brown, and White, 2009; Finney and Rishbeth, 2006). "Walking... inevitably leads to other subjects" suggests Solnit (2001, p.8). We indeed found that this alternative to one-off interview formats supported gradual revelations that enabled participants to express ambiguities and contradictions; both common discrepancies between intentions and actions, and those specifically reflecting the complexity of cultural hybridity for first generation migrants. Listening to the actual recordings (as opposed to reading the transcripts), the quality of evoking a sense of place is striking, and prompted a focus on audio content within the dissemination strategy which was largely achieved by means of the website (www.walkingvoices.group.shef.ac.uk).

Reflective analysis and dissemination.

From working intensively with a small group of participants we recognized the need to contextualize and confirm the findings. We scheduled interviews with a selection of participants to discuss an overview of their use of public spaces and travelling, and to probe deeper into some of the issues arising from their recordings. We circulated 'draft implications' to a range of local and national environmental and community organizations (many of which we have contacted in our initial networking) and undertook interviews to incorporate their perspectives on the issues raised. Through transcription, coding and ongoing discussion within the research team it was possible build up profiles of preference, concerns and motivating factors for each participant.

The collaboration with BBC Radio Sheffield was integral to participant recruitment and community dissemination, with the ultimate intention of creating a radio program. Participants were attracted to receiving training and insider insight into a high profile partner, and took pride in learning new skills with professional quality equipment. The recordings provided a media-friendly focus for disseminating the research within a local context. Though ultimately a stand-alone program was not achieved, a few participants were interviewed on existing mainstream programs, and most had their clips broadcast on air. Participants were consulted both prior to and after the fieldwork with regard to consent to use their recordings, with care taken to discuss the implications for differing media: a one-off radio broadcast, a publically accessible website with images and academically focused papers. Some chose to remain anonymous, others wanted to be credited for their creative output.⁵

Critique of methodological approach

The Walking Voices method was developed to attempt to replicate as near as possible the everyday experience of being outdoors, trying to reach beyond the distancing of an indoor interview, or the staged nature of researcher led trips to specific leisure destinations. It aimed to give space for participants to develop their own ideas and issues to communicate, with an absolute minimum of direction

from researchers. The gradual gaining of an overview of the participants' lifeworlds was vital for the careful analysis of emerging themes of the recorded material, and to demonstrate a genuine interest and respect for the people and communities involved. However, the intensity and demands on both researchers and participants restricted the practical scope of numbers involved.

Within the context of social science research the method offers a precise detail and tactile quality to previous work on place attachment. The unusual and engaging research activity attracted a varied group of participants, certainly a different sample than might have been recruited to take part in interviews or questionnaires. The ethnic range is unusual in academic studies, which have a tendency to focus on specific ethnic groups rather than interrogating diverse views of a common place (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2009). An approach that mostly absented the researcher from the production of the primary data allowed participants freedom to express values and interests, and was key to our ideas about ethical relationships in combining creative processes and research, but did limit some of the means in which the data could be evaluated.

Findings: Experiencing Transcultural Places

The Walking Voices project generated narratives which contribute new understandings of landscape and migration in two important respects. In focusing on the urban landscape experience of first generation migrants it presents an experiential focus on the role, qualities and opportunities of public space. Secondly, the use of immersive participant-led recordings allows a vital insight into person - place interactions, providing a 'landscape specific' framework for analysis. The findings highlight the potential and problems of ethnically diverse neighborhoods as places where migrants can establish a sense of belonging (Binnie, Young, Millington, and Holloway, 2006; Amin, 2002; Alexander, Edwards, and Temple, 2007).

Comparisons and connections to the country of origin

“This morning was quite shiny, hot, sunny, and some people came out without jacket – the thing is now it’s raining. When it gets to about 12 something the rain starts, and that’s why I said earlier on you don’t trust the weather. Great Britain can be anything, sometimes it can be hot, sometimes it can be ok, one time it can be winter. Unreliable, the weather in Great Britain is unreliable. And that’s why you have to put your jacket on, that’s what I do always”.

Osman from Somalia

Changing country of residence can lead to feelings of culture shock and reduce a person’s ability to undertake everyday tasks, and this study found the context of the local environment is a strong contributing factor. Disorientation, difficulty in understanding social situations and lack of familiar leisure activities can be exacerbated in the public realm and contribute to initial negative feelings about residence. However, going outside to undertake daily tasks can support practical re-skilling of new migrants. By observing others, reading information, visiting different shops and noting landmarks, newcomers engage in experiential learning, and pick up customs and competencies related to their local neighborhood and beyond. Amassing insider knowledge supports a sense of belonging and re-kindles an ability to feel relaxed and ‘at home’, one of the dimensions of place attachment.

Memories of migrants’ home countries are sometimes prompted by outdoor places in the city. New landscapes and experiences are compared both positively and negatively to those in the home country. Views, social practices and activities can all signify a break with the past (“This is very different from...”) or a means of continuing an identity (“This reminds me so much of...”).



Figure 3. Ellesmere Green, a small central green space near the mosque, library, post office and bus stops. (Photo credit: Mark Powell).

Finding aspects of commonality with previous places of residence is generally a restorative experience, mostly prompting feelings of pleasure, sometimes with aspects of loss. Activities within public space are important. Continuing habits of socializing - men sitting outdoors having a chat, or greeting people in the street - appeared to be particularly significant as they reflect deeper personal values of the importance of community. *“Socialize is like you socialize back home. Place where everyone meet and everybody sits down, have a talk”* (Abdullah, from The Yemen, talking about the small green in the center of Burngreave). This connection of memory is an important contribution to theoretical enquiries into the nature of place attachment, and broadens the understanding of familiarity with regard to landscape.

The research found that migrants were creative in the means in which they re-interpreted activities that they enjoyed in the past, adapting locations of walking, driving or socializing to a new context. This implies that the participants were engaging at times in ‘reflective nostalgia’ (Boym, 2001), a fluid interpretation of past and present experiences in a way that provides new insights into the nature of their located identity.

Performing individual and community identities in public

“I hated that road... I am very wary of going there because there are a lot of Arab men and women always looking at you and judging you, seeing what you got on, seeing how you look, seeing if your scarf is on properly”

Shireen from The Yemen.

Many first generation migrants live near to others of their own ethnic community, and this proximity means there can be a high level of awareness that by being outdoors they are responding to the public gaze of that community. The research underlined the importance of performing social roles in response to the expectation of one’s own community, often framed as a need to reflect well on your family, and this dimension of performance can directly impact on personal experiences of public space.

Cultural codes of how you are seen, and who you are seen to be, are complex, and relate to one’s own perception of visibility in a public setting. While being outside in their local neighborhood provides a social context for migrants, this can become burdensome at times, either by restricting opportunities or by having too many obligations. Making occasional or regular trips out of the neighborhood was a strategy used by participants in our research for temporarily escaping a known public gaze and finding some personal privacy while outdoors.



Figure 4. Qualities of walking with a pushchair.

For most first generation migrants, the visibility of being different from the white British population increases when in less ethnically diverse neighborhoods, such as rural localities or more affluent parts of the city. Visiting these areas can trigger feelings of vulnerability to racism, especially if this has been previously experienced. Most of the participants considered themselves more socially comfortable living in areas of ethnic diversity, and identified positively with this aspect of their home neighborhood.

Life choices reflected in place attachment and sense of belonging

“I know this is an area predominantly that is talked about being full of crime and violence... I lived here for a year, and I never really witnessed any incidents really and I know there are things that happen but I never seen anything. And today is another Sunday evening like everywhere else really. I can see the sunset across the horizon and it’s quite beautiful, bits of gold glowing, soft background of purple clouds...”

Lola from Jamaica

Living in a city offers migrants a diverse range of experiences beyond that found in their immediate neighborhood or own ethnic community. Exploration of different places and activities can inform aspirations for the future, sometimes coupled to their motivation for initially moving to the UK. Their life choices are often shaped by a tension between keeping contact with their own ethnic group, respecting and enjoying its cultural traditions, and a desire to embrace new opportunities. Negotiating aspects of individual and community identities can take a spatial form, concerning both daily movements and long term residence. Movement and exploration can represent a confident development of hybrid identities, mixing elements of affiliation and association that both reflect and inform a complex sense of self.

The recordings clearly represent the complexity and ambiguity with which migrants engage with place. The participants identified a range of positive and negative feelings about their locality, some of which were informed by their experience of difference, and comparisons with their previous home. Through

becoming familiar with a place, and finding means of connection with their personal values, they develop a sense of themselves as locals. The characteristics of super-diversity of the neighborhood give emphasis to a shared sense of belonging that is less dependent on country of birth. Attachments to their current home exist alongside transnational links and options of future moves (within the UK or internationally).

In understanding issues of integration and belonging in multi-ethnic neighborhoods there is a need to recognize the importance of non-verbal interactions. Movement through and spending time outdoors were connected with emotional understandings, social interpretation and the physicality of the bodily experience (Ingold, 2000, Massey, 2005). We suggest that political discourses that highlight separatism at the local scale often fail to recognize the nuances of social networks, place attachment, and engagement in the public realm experienced by migrants of different ethnic backgrounds and life situations.

Guidance for Practitioners: Placemaking in the Space of Flow

The implications arising from this research were formulated by careful discussion of the fieldwork, in particular contextualizing the recordings of the key participants with information provided by local and national community organizations, and our own understandings of use of the open spaces in Burngreave from our site visits. I also drew on my own professional background in landscape architecture, responses to presenting the findings in professional contexts, and awareness of current practice in these areas. As such, the guidelines are less a direct outcome of the recordings, and more a dialogue stemming from them, a critical engagement that seeks to give practitioners the opportunities to deepen their understanding of migrant experiences. The implications for practitioners are also summarized in a leaflet, distributed in hard copy and available in digital form from the Walking Voices website.

The key points are outlined below. There is no apology that many of these points are also relevant to improving the experience of public open space for all users, that which is common between people being as important to that which differs.

But I suggest that because of the common past experience of many (not all) migrants – disorientation, unfamiliarity, feeling unskilled or isolated, experience of racism – attention to these issues might be more important for this user group than the non-migrant population.

Facilitate overlapping and flexible use of space

Frequent use of parks, streets, public transport and urban centers can support individual relationships and provides opportunities over time for acquaintances to strengthen to friendships. For this to happen, public spaces need to be safe and attractive to use. Visual permeability – multiple ways of viewing in and out of a place – can be particularly important, both in terms of a personal sense of safety, and of increasing the visible presence of different ethnic communities. Priorities for improvement should be given to locations where people gather due to common interests that cross over ethnic groups: playgrounds, bus stops, sports facilities and entrances to schools and libraries, waterfronts and large parks. Design and plan for spaces to be flexibly used by different user groups, with the possibility of informal appropriation regarding seating, types of activities and seasonal uses as well as formal temporary activities such as markets and festivals.



Figure 5. Car washing in the street. (Photo credit: Mark Powell).

Be aware of culturally defined behavior and legitimize where possible

Acceptable behavior within the public realm is culturally defined, and as such can present misunderstandings, and occasionally conflict, between different ethnic communities. For example, men from some cultural backgrounds are used to meeting in groups outside of the home, and often appropriate street spaces for socializing. This can sometimes be perceived as threatening by others, especially if the places used to meet are degraded or associated with crime (for example derelict plots). Increasing potential locations for social gatherings which are explicitly designed and well maintained, and providing comfortable seating which accommodates groups rather than couples, can help reconfigure these associations and tacitly legitimize such gatherings. Cultural values can vary with regard to litter, noise and acceptable use of street space, potentially leading to petty irritations which exacerbate or reinforce ethnic stereotypes. It may not be possible or appropriate to ‘design out’ these differences, but supporting community political and social structures that enhance communication could ease the sometimes awkward quality of urban life, that of ‘living among strangers’ (Sandercock, 2003a).

Support diversity without resorting to ethnic stereotypes

The ‘critical mass’ of one’s own ethnic community was seen as crucial in providing support, resources and social contact. Also the mix of nationalities was also often cited as a positive characteristic, and the diversity of residents was something that, at best, provided a rich social and entrepreneurial resource for the area. A quality of super diverse neighborhoods is a high level of transitory residents, with an inflow of newcomers hoping to make a new life. Planning policies that can support informality of land uses, short-term enterprises and micro-businesses may be appropriate to ensuring the vitality and strengths of this residential mix. Promoting an area as a ‘cultural’ or multicultural destination can give a neighborhood particular protection and increase financial resources. However, caution needs to be exercised. Inter-community relations can be damaged if it is perceived that one ethnic group is being given preferential treatment. More subtly but intrinsically problematic is the process of urban designers or planners naively confirming stereotypes of bounded ethnic identities, sometimes by use of particular icons from the country of origin, which fails to

recognize the flux of transnational links that characterize individuals and communities.

Tackle inequality

Though living in an ethnically diverse community was highly valued, the low socio-economic status of the area meant that residents were, often reluctantly, planning to move to another neighborhood at some future date. As well as flashpoint issues of crime, education and housing, there were also frustrations at a smaller scale: lack of provision of cashpoints, supermarkets and poor maintenance of the streetscape; and residents were aware that in other parts of the city there was a much better quality of urban environment. A permanent move to another part of the city, often motivated by a desire for better schooling and a safer environment, was characterized by participants as a significant loss of contact with their religious and ethnic communities.

“Everything in this area is.... low level... so why would I be living in an area with low level? Sometimes... because my community live here, my people, you cannot associate with other people, and if you want to go to [place name] a predominantly white community, you get yourself isolated and lonely... lot of people, don't think of this area as bad.... They enjoy the area, they want to be here”.

Osman from Somalia.

For first generation migrants the conflict of push and pull factors can be particularly sharp: sometimes a sense of shame that they have not accomplished a better standard of living, against the relief of growing familiarity and attachment to this new location that they now call home. Environmental inequality is well documented in academic and policy arenas, but is still an issue that is far from resolved. Decoupling the links between areas of multiple disadvantage and communities of high ethnic diversity is an urgent challenge for urban professionals across design, planning and politics.

Summary

This chapter has looked at some of the ways in which place is experienced and envisioned specifically within a neighborhood which is ethnically mixed. The qualities of this transcultural place are not shaped by one population shift, but by a complex web of incomings and outgoings, and an ongoing history of short-term residents becoming long-term residents. The dynamics of how these cultures are represented in the urban environment is reflected through physical adaptations, flexible appropriation, patterns of socialization, and both shared and divergent values of what makes the area 'home'. Working on planning and design projects in neighborhoods such as these require professionals to be cultural agile, good listeners, observant to nuances of use and advocates for those with less political and economic power. Above all, these communities need skilled optimists who can recognize and improve the potential of urban spaces for communication, empowerment and diverse ways of belonging.

Footnotes

1. These were disturbances in northern English towns in areas characterized by racial residential and educational segregation and a context of high unemployment. Neighborhoods affected had majority populations of Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents. Violence was, by and large, provoked by white racist gangs targeting Asian areas, with subsequent retaliation. The police force suffered high casualties. (Kundnani, 2001).
2. The fieldwork was undertaken by the author and a Research Fellow, Dr Mark Powell, during the period 2006-2007. The research was funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council.
3. Burngreave New Deal for Communities (BNDfC) was a government funded organization set up to regenerate the Burngreave area. £52 million was awarded to Burngreave by the Department for Communities and Local Governments' Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, to be spent on the regeneration of the area over a ten year period from 2001 to 2011. <http://www.bndfc.co.uk/>
4. We were not able to involve first generation migrants who did not speak reasonable English, or those who were not confident in learning simple new technologies. Within the scope of the project we addressed this by conducting two group and one individual interview with older members of the Pakistani community.
5. All participants' names are anonymized within this paper.

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Articulating transnational attachments through on-site narratives

Clare Rishbeth

At the heart of any attachment is a story. It may be the story of a moment, a day, a year. Or, more commonly, the stories are ones that emerge gradually, take shape, backtrack, repeat in parts, tail away, reappear. People bring their own stories to places they love and places they hate. And then they tell their own stories about these self same places; stories that will bind them to a places past and present.

As researchers we venture onto other people's territory and ask to hear their stories. Asking questions, listening, recording, interpreting, representing, disseminating; these actions are the authoritative foundations of research activity. And through these, we aim to pay appropriate attention to everyday life, to represent both the telling detail and the broader patterns of their attachments to place.

Though the majority of place attachment research looks at quantifying dimensions of attachment (Lewicka, 2011), there has also been a significant strand of qualitative work which gives recognition to the role of the story, and indeed, the multiplicity of stories that represent the complexity of understanding shared spaces (Sandercock, 2003). A skilful interviewer draws out the contexts behind the anecdotes and helps the interviewee shape meaning from their own experience. This research work has certainly developed our understanding of place attachment from a positive/negative dichotomy to one where individual narratives bridge the past and the present; the psychological process dimension of place attachment in the framework developed by Scannell and Gifford (2010).

This chapter discusses how it is possible to keep a focus on prompting narratives, as with a traditional method such as the in-depth interview, but design a richer and

more responsive research environment specifically appropriate to researching place attachment. Qualitative research methods explicitly informing theories of ‘place attachment’ have tended to focus on focus groups and interviews, with some limited exploration of visual techniques (Lewicka, 2011). The central significance of the field of environmental psychology has inevitably informed the common methods used. Patterson and Williams, in their discussion of place research (2005), urge ‘critical pluralism’, the need to learn from the integrity of different research traditions and expertise. I suggest that inspiration from a wider range of disciplines concerned with people-place relationships, such as geography, anthropology and landscape architecture, can provide fruitful avenues for methodological development, as well as broadening our understanding of how place impacts on a range of people.

In this chapter I explore the inter-relationship between these two forms of diversity: the potential of more innovative qualitative methods, and supporting articulation of place attachments with ‘harder to reach’ participant groups - people who are difficult to include within more traditional research projects due to practical, cultural or linguistic barriers. I describe two methodological approaches, evolved from a range of disciplines, which can offer greater richness to explorations of place attachment and can complement existing research practice in representing commonly marginalised viewpoints. The first is located storytelling to explore experiential qualities of attachment; “the ‘experience-in-place’ that creates meaning” (Manzo, 2005, p.74). The second is participatory methods that support unexpected responses and diverse voices. I explore the potential of integrating these two approaches in one research project, and show how the methods informed research findings relating to transnational place attachments among first generation migrants to the United Kingdom. In conclusion, I argue the relevance of these approaches for developing methods for researching place attachment, depending on the focus of the particular research questions and the research context.

Two methodological approaches to extend or deepen qualitative research inquiry into place attachment.

Located storytelling to explore experiential qualities of attachment.

The standard in-depth interview has rich data to offer the qualitative researcher exploring place meaning and attachments. However, by focusing purely on a recounted narrative in a somewhat artificial circumstance, we may miss much else that is important about being a person in a place. Amin (2008) suggests that space is ‘collectively experienced as a form of tacit, neurological and sensory knowing.’ Ethnographic approaches aim to include research participants in a more active relationship with both the researcher and the topic of research, which can increase focus on sensory qualities of being (Pink, 2009). This goes beyond a simple categorisation of place with regard to touch, smell, or sound - though this is already a step beyond what is usually discussed in an interview setting. Such an approach moves towards articulating a sensory connection between people and place: what some have called a ‘zone of entanglement’ (Ingold, 2008, p1797) or ‘throwtogetherness’ (Massey 2005, p140).

Interrogating the body-place relationship implies the importance of on-site research. If we are to consider the lived experience of neighbourhoods and the full range of places in one’s daily rounds, then a method that enables outdoor located research, where the characteristics of each place, including transitional and incidental places, and journeys in-between, is essential. With such a method the physical effort of an uphill walk, the long views, the smell and noise of traffic, can be relived and noted and added to the richness of the data. One role of the researcher, then, is to develop reflexive processes that attend to these diverse place experiences and inform academic knowledge, communicating rich accounts “that respect the irreducibility of human experience”(O’Reilly, 2005, p3).

A general interest in sensory qualities of space has shaped a research strand in anthropology and geography that looks at outdoor walking practices (for example the work of Ingold and Lee (2008) and Adams and Guy (2007)). Researchers aim to enhance qualitative methods which use disengaged storytelling, or that generate purely visual material for discussion (i.e. photo-elicitation), and encourage a shared sense of connection with the place (Ingold and Lee, 2008). This often takes the form of the ‘go-along’ interview, essentially an interview conducted while the interviewee and participant walk together (Carpiano, 2009; Kusenback, 2003),

which has evolved into techniques loosely termed ‘sensewalking’ or ‘sensory urbanism’ (Adams and Guy, 2007). Specific attention is given to qualities of sensory connection with the location through the peripatetic experience. These techniques are based on those pioneered earlier by childhood researchers that recognised the need to observe and discuss outdoor play with children in situ to the activity (Hart, 1979; Moore, 1986; Burton and Price-Spratlen, 1999). Participatory on-site methods have also informed community planning processes with diverse community groups (for example Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993). A few studies have compared findings on people’s experience of outdoor places between on-site and indoor located interviews, and strongly support the additional richness generated by the outdoor based methods (Hart, 1979; Evans and Jones, 2011). Though this dynamic has been discussed with regard to research on outdoor places, the critical distinction is whether research is conducted in situ to the place which is the focus of the research (which could, for example, be a home or work environment), or in a different location.

This chapter makes the case for research which pays careful attention to individual responses to particular places, proposing that bodily experiences, temporal factors, social dynamics and cultural expectations can be more clearly understood through the particular than through broad generalisations. This is not to negate or minimise the significance and interplay of multiple place attachments. Affect, cognition and behaviour are engaged as the process dimension of attachment, as outlined by Scannel and Gifford (2010), and experiences of one place are strongly informed by memories and comparisons with others. In particular, this chapter will examine the significance of environmental memory (Cooper-Marcus, 1992) and qualities of movement through and between sites as opposed to a static viewpoint.

Participatory methods to support unexpected findings and diverse voices.

On-site research methods aim to counterbalance the ‘distancing’ between experience and story that can be an outcome of standard interview. In a similar way, participatory approaches aim to reduce the ‘distancing’ between researcher and participant by addressing the power relations inherent in the dynamic of the researcher and the researched (Kindon et al, 2008). These approaches often utilise

creative processes to facilitate the participant as generator of guiding questions and primary data. Israel et al (1998) argue the importance of researchers and participants working together in order to refine methods relevant to a specific cultural context. Some humility and flexibility is required of the researcher to do this; a recognition that the participant may have the best questions as well as the best answers, and may perceive a different, more relevant scope, to the area of inquiry. These methods can't be standardised between participants as easily as more traditional methods, and indeed this is rarely the aim (Patterson and Williams, 2005). The strength of this approach lies in 'obliqueness:' the ability to discover deeper truths and ambiguities, to tread gently, to connect between a place and an emotional response. Participation also give rise to a physiological dynamic, that as we do something with our hands/body, especially when we feel a sense of agency, we relax and feel more able to talk about that which really matters (Kusenbach, 2003). These methods can be especially useful when the participant group may be less able to be articulate about their experiences in a more formal interview situation: children, people communicating in a second language, or those who may be wary or less inclined to answer questions set by a person in a privileged position.

Walking Voices – project methodology

The Walking Voices project¹ was an eighteen month research project which focused on Burngreave, a neighbourhood with high ethnic diversity in Sheffield, a city in the north of England². The research addressed how everyday places within this area were perceived and valued by residents from different migrant backgrounds. Both methodological approaches steered the design of the research methods, the primary focus of which was self-recorded audio recordings made by participants on site. The participants recruited to take part were all first generation migrants, living in Burngreave, who had a reasonable level of spoken English³.

Specific ethical and practical challenges of methodological design in this project were raised by the research topic and participant group involved. Research questions focused largely on intangible, ambiguous qualities: the role of memory in shaping place attachment, the importance of temporal aspects of place experience, and the complexity of transnational attachments. These were

researched with a population where the majority do not speak English as a first language, who often live in conditions of disadvantage, have conflicting pressures on their time and who are sometimes cautious about the role of research and people in authority. We aimed to recruit participants across age, gender, religion and countries of birth. Atypical of most migration focused research, and because we were exploring notions of a shared neighbourhood, we recruited across ethnic groups, encompassing diverse life circumstances rather than essentialising bounded national or ethnic identities (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2009).

Using locational storytelling and participatory methods helped address these challenges within a rigorous research framework. Selection of participants with migrant backgrounds was aided by use of a novel and engaging method which privileged storytelling rather than question answering, and cast them as ‘experts in the field’. Working with high status partners (in this case the regional BBC radio station) gave value to participants work and improved dissemination with wider community. To support reliable findings that could capture the immediacy and specificity of place experience it was important for the methods used to respond flexibly to participants’ own interpretations of multiple places, enabling them to direct their own focus of interest and level of engagement. This focus on place enabled the voicing of self through a gathering of responses; opening up, rather than presupposing, different axes of personal and community identity. Though working with a small sample size, validity of findings was increased by repeated generation of on-site data and ongoing contact with participants over a period of months. This built trust between researchers and participants, gradually helping them gain confidence in articulating sometimes complex experiences and emotions.

Familiarisation and recruitment.

The initial months of the project were an immersive experience in the neighbourhood. Aware of the problems of over-researching users of local cultural and religious centres, the researchers used a dispersed approach, chatting to people in parks and on the street, and taking part in community activities. From formal and informal conversations with over sixty residents we gradually selected our participants, based on their motivations for involvement and our requirement for

diverse spread of participant profiles. These were six men and five women, ages spanning 20s to 60s, with different employment status, family networks, physical abilities and access to transport. All had migrated to the UK, some recently and some decades ago. Their countries of origin were Jamaica, the Yemen, Kurdistan, Pakistan and Somalia.

Key fieldwork process: self recorded, on-site audio.

The participants were loaned mini-disk recorders for a three month period spanning late summer to early winter 2006. Their brief was to regularly record live commentaries during walks or times outside, describing the location, their movements and thoughts prompted by the changing experience of their neighbourhood. The participants were trained by BBC Radio Sheffield in the use of mini-disk recorders for this purpose, and it was clearly stated that the recordings (anonymised when appropriate) would be used both for the research project and for possible broadcast on local radio. We asked participants to aim to make recordings independently, about once a week over a period of a few months. In reality only a few made this many, and most made significantly less. However, the recordings made were much longer than anticipated, the average length was approximately thirty minutes, and sometimes up to one hour. Fifty recordings were made in total.

Working with locational storytelling and participant led audio methods.

Our approach facilitated complex narratives through which participants expressed their engagement with outdoor places in their neighbourhood and elsewhere, and their changing ideas of their sense of self in relation these places. It is true that awareness of the recordings end uses will have shaped accounts to differing degrees, though the overall impression listening to the recordings is of people talking to close friends rather than presenting themselves to a broader audience. By recounting a multiplicity of stories, reactions and distractions, participants align the temporal qualities of moving through both physical and mental space in the process of also talking about the meaning of place and their attachments to them, as demonstrated in this recording made by Ahmed, who grew up in The Yemen

“Some day we were driving down here, it was night time, and the moon was full. Just right at the top there. and it was beautiful. I stopped there and took a picture of it. [...] It was such a beautiful day and clear sky and a full moon. It was beautiful. That’s what we are planning, if we going move to move, one day from this house... it has to have a view. Either sea, or like this view, because I love it, I love it.”

The methodology was designed to minimize the power dynamics between participants and researcher by, ‘absenting’ the researcher from the recordings and establishing the participant’s role as experts in their own localities. The majority of recordings were entirely self-directed, giving participants control of places selected for commentary, and the depth and range of their discussions. However, the range of people we worked with meant that we needed flexible methods to accommodate individual preferences. The use of paired walking (researcher with participant) was the most common technique, and this was used with about half the participants for some or all of their recordings. During the paired walks, the researcher tried to maintain a position of ‘active listening’ rather than questioning. Though it potentially limited our goal that topics were entirely directed by participants, some benefits emerged. These recordings tended to be longer than those made independently, and the presence of the researcher often stimulated a deeper level of reflection.

Analysis and dissemination

The analysis was based on transcripts of all the walks, and data were coded using NVivo software. We conducted a second stage analysis of ten standard interviews: four with participants and six with contacts in environmental and community organisations. In these interviews we shared reflections on the emerging findings, checking our initial analysis, and considered potential implications for neighbourhood regeneration.

Working with BBC Radio Sheffield shaped the rationale of using on-site audio recordings, and had status and appeal within the group of participants and their wider communities. At the end of the project, audio clips from the research (agreed with participants), and extended interviews with some participants and the

researcher were broadcast. Through this process, the attachments of first generation migrants to their neighbourhood were made public, an important sharing of stories in an authoritative and accessible form. We also produced the website with audio clips (www.walkingvoices.group.shef.ac.uk).

Transnational attachments: local places through the eyes of first generation migrants.

While the main focus of this chapter is on describing methodological approaches that can be used for a deep qualitative analysis of place attachment, in this section I present some of the findings from the Walking Voices project since they are inextricably mixed with the methods themselves. I will also illustrate how the methods described earlier in this chapter can be used to elicit descriptions of place meanings and attachments. The Walking Voices project research questions focused on the connection between the local and the international, how memories of past landscapes may shape the quality and nature of new attachments to place (Rishbeth and Powell, 2012). Through understanding migrants' experiences of landscape what can we learn about dimensions of memory, and actions of remembering? What is the relationship between developing place attachment and a shared sense of belonging?

Embodied experiences: the role of memory in developing attachment

The methods used meant that participants focused on the importance of what they happened upon on their daily routes, the moments and materiality of everyday life. The shops with ethnically specific stock ethnically were often mentioned: the choice of food, the quality and price of it. Glimpses of familiarity in landscapes – visually, through activities or social patterns – allow individuals who are new to an area to recognise starting points of belonging and place attachment, or at least an environment which is not completely alien.

Bodily sensations and action linked to memory are particularly powerful in expressing transnational identities in place. Often the participants defined their own identity and values by what they chose to do: walking in the countryside, dancing outdoors at a party, growing vegetables or gathering outside to exchange

news with their peers. These activities engaged the senses, and were embodied in movement, sound, effort and community. Mahmud, who grew up in The Yemen, evocatively detailed driving the winding road over a hill pass between Sheffield and Manchester: “especially the turning areas, going like snake, the curves, the turnings and the bends, the scenery, it’s spectacular”. The physical experience of driving and the travelling scenic dimension reminded him of the Yemen. Mahmud goes driving “to relax and have nice time.” Such experiences, especially ones that become part of one’s new everyday life help to foster a sense of place attachment.

The affordances of the local landscape to facilitate these activities were also important factors in developing place attachment. The small triangle of grass outside the mosque may not be especially attractive, but the benches and its central location mean that for the older men from the Yemen it is the place “where everyone meets and everybody sits down, have a talk.” Although Abdullah has lived in Sheffield since the 1950s, he described it as “socialise is like you socialise back home”. The memory of a cultural archetype, one with intersecting cultural, gendered, religious and social dynamics, is made present by people in place, doing what is important to them. And by socialising with his friends outside the mosque, Abdullah strengthens both his Yemani heritage and his territory of belonging within the Burngreave neighbourhood. Through appropriation of this space, emotional responses related to rootedness and ‘at-easeness’ arguably dimensions of place attachment, are engendered (Seamon, 1979, Relph, 1976). Through examining transnational place attachment we discover a “multiplicity of trajectories” (Massey, 2005, p55) at local, national and international scales, often made tangible though embodied experiences of place.

Transnational place attachments and diverse ways of belonging

People’s spontaneous reactions to places in their lives can also shed light on the complexities of such attachments for migrants, termed “transnational attachments.” All migrants adapt in some ways to a new environmental context, finding ways to continue what is essentially of value but reinterpreting the details. For example, whereas Camille used to head to the beach in Jamaica when she lived there, now when she experiences stressful times in Sheffield she enjoys the restorative effect of walking in the local countryside. Recognising differences

between past and present places can highlight values previously taken for granted, the experience of migration inevitably leading to questioning links between cultural heritage, personal identity, and attachments with specific places. Our findings certainly support notions of multiple, simultaneous attachments for participants (Scopelliti & Tiberio, 2010; Giuliani et al, 2003; Manzo, 2003).

While recognising the significance of distance, it is important to also critique the influence of time (Smaldone et al, 2008). Though it is usual to imagine migrant experiences as pre and post migration, such a dichotomous view inadequately represents the transnational dynamics of identity and attachment. Before migration a person already has a connection to the future destination, an expectation informed by shared images, gossip and stories. On arrival, and in those first weeks, months, even years of settling, the local environment isn't just measured against the place that has been left, but against the anticipated (imaginary) place.

Khaled, an asylum seeker from Iraq in his early twenties, was the most critical of all our participants of Burngreave itself: "This is not my kind of England places." Whilst generally positive about England, at the local scale he focused on the degraded environment of this disadvantaged neighbourhood, fear of crime, poor quality housing, and the often demanding social relationships expected within the Kurdish community there⁴. Ultimately, his local place 'detachment' was not a desire to return to Iraq, but a disappointment against his imaginings of an idealised destination. Conversely, for other migrants, feelings of alienation may be shaped by idealised memories, a nostalgia for a past place which acquires a new relevance within a narrative of lost cultural identity (Boym, 2001).

Memories discussed by participants were not only of their country of origin, but just as importantly, of the places they now live. Whether over a period of years or decades, new places of residence soon accumulate a past as well. The participants are not at the same point of their lives as they were when they first arrived in Sheffield, and through their changing experience of local places it is possible to see the process outlined by Hernandez et al. (2007), from attachment to identification. These places, and the overlaying of memories, can provide tangible markers of establishment, of moving on from an newcomer or outsider status to

someone who belongs. The role of memory in place attachment is not a simple representation of nostalgia, but one form of creative process that aids engagement between the local and the transnational. Attachments to specific locations do appear to have a role in a process of settling, recognising how one might authentically belong in a different cultural environment and take part in this community (Amsdem et al, 2011). Place attachment develops as an embodiment of choices of participation and individual movements, interweaving a personal sense of identity with that of belonging and attachment to a specific neighbourhood or city.

The potential of participatory and located methods to contribute place attachment research.

The Walking Voices project developed novel methods in order to address the challenges of working with a particular group of participants, and focusing on connected and multiple scales of outdoor place experience. The two methodological approaches gave a steer with regard to research practice and ethics, one which may be broadly applicable to many qualitative research projects on place attachment.

Specific methods used will depend on the resources and partnerships available, and the relevance to potential participants. As with all methods, it is important to acknowledge challenges and limitations. The high level of researcher involvement needed to support ongoing participation will often not be feasible. Research questions related to multiple pre-selected sites will not be addressed with methods that give autonomy of place selection to participants. These methodological approaches will never offer reliable generalisations, for example comparing responses with regard to gender or ethnic background, which are more appropriately addressed with quantitative methods.

Openness to more collaborative and flexible modes of research practice is a timely challenge for researchers of place attachment. As noted by Robson (2002, p. 216), “If notions of collaboration and participation are taken seriously, then some power of decision about aspects of the design and data collection are lost to the

researcher. This may well be a price worth paying.” The findings aim to shed light on the nuances and interactions between people and place, to provoke insights, relevance and representation that may be missed by larger scale studies which, by necessity, apply a ‘coarser grain’ of response. Working through these challenges in a reflective and transparent way, with careful, slow interpretation, is important in establishing the integrity of the research (Finney and Rishbeth, 2006). In the Walking Voices project repeated contact with participants for over half a year, in comparison to the standard single contact interview, was useful in establishing trust and adapting methods to individuals. Even more importantly, it provided us with a broad insight into participants’ circumstances, values and life choices by which we were better able to understand the material generated in their recordings.

The findings of this research make a clear contribution to understandings of transnational place attachments. The ingenuity of the project articulated the voices of a diverse group of people who would not have considered involvement in more traditional research, and who are less often heard in public discourses. The use of participatory methods did support unexpected findings, with a wide range of visual, social, political, ecological and historic issues alluded to or specifically discussed by participants, a diversity that we would have not been able to predict in planning a traditional structured interview. A method based on locational storytelling and capturing spontaneous emotional responses proved to be especially appropriate when looking at the sensory and experiential qualities of memory and connection, of social activity and cultural identities.

Arguably, research on place attachment has not wrestled enough with broader debates on representing disenfranchised populations and the ethics of research processes. Though located and participatory methodological approaches can be especially useful for research in cross-cultural situations, they offer a more inclusive engagement to many people. Addressing of power relations in research settings, and giving a greater role to participants in framing their own understanding of research questions can have a dual benefit. Participants are situated as experts, credited with different types of knowledge and experience, and become involved in a process that they view as meaningful, with scope to develop their own skills. Researchers gather material for analysis that simply wouldn’t be

accessible through more traditional methods, entering into a more open dialogue which acknowledges the inherent complexity of people's identities and experiences of place. As such, findings arising from these forms of research practice can come closer to an insider view of a neighbourhood (Nicotera, 2007). Connections between how outdoor places are designed – their physicality and affordances - and how they are interpreted by users has particular relevance for developing appropriate social policy, planning and design practice .

These multiple challenges - to develop theory, to engage participants meaningfully, and to inform practice - can and should be a broad ambition of research into people and place. Ultimately, utilising a broader range of methods can only lead to a richer and more relevant understanding of the complexity of real places, and people's attachment to them.

Footnotes

1. The research was conducted from 2006-2007 by myself (lead investigator) and Dr Mark Powell (research associate). It was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council of the UK.
2. Burngreave is a 20 minute walk from the city centre, and is one of the most ethnically diverse neighbourhoods in Sheffield (44% from non White-British ethnic groups, 22% were born overseas, from 2001 census data). 48% of homes are categorised as experiencing multiple aspects of disadvantage.
3. We acknowledge the limitations of this practical requirement. In particular the elder Pakistani community was largely excluded. We addressed this in part by conducting one individual interview (female) and two group interviews (male) with this resident group.
4. Though Khaled introduced himself to us as living in Burngreave, he had recently moved in with a white British family in a different neighbourhood. He visited Burngreave on an almost daily basis.

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Publication 1

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Publication 2

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Publication 3

Powell, M. and Rishbeth, C. (2012) Walking Voices: flexibility in place and meanings of place by first generation migrants, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 103(1), pp.69-84.

Please see information for paper 1.

Publication 4

Rishbeth, C. and Powell, M. (2013) Place Attachment and Memory: Landscapes of Belonging as Experienced Post-migration. *Landscape Research*, 38(2), pp.160-178.

Anna Jorgensen [removed]@sheffield.ac.uk> 22 July 2015 at 12:54

To: Clare Rishbeth [removed]@sheffield.ac.uk>

Dear Clare,

Yes I can confirm that you have permission to include the 'authors accepted manuscript' pre-print format version of your manuscript.

Best wishes, Anna

Dr Anna Jorgensen

Senior Lecturer

Editor- Landscape Research

Department of Landscape

University of Sheffield
Arts Tower, Western Bank
Sheffield S10 2TN

Publication 5

Rishbeth, C. (2013) Everyday Places that Connect Disparate Homelands: Remembering through the City. In: J. Hou (Ed.) Transcultural Cities: Border-Crossing and Placemaking. London, Routledge. pp.118-132.

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Publication 6

Rishbeth, C. (2014) Articulating Transnational Attachments through On-site Narratives. In: L. Manzo and P. Devine-Wright (Eds.) Place Attachment: Advances in Theory, Methods and Applications. London, Routledge. pp.100-111.

Davey, Sarah [removed]@tandf.co.uk
16 September 2015 at 11:57
To: Clare Rishbeth [removed]@sheffield.ac.uk

Dear Clare

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Yours sincerely,

Sarah Davey

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3. Permissions from co-authors

Dr. Nissa Finney

(now at University of St Andrews).

23rd June 2015

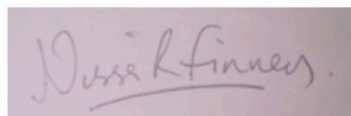
Dear Clare,

I am delighted to know that you will be submitting for PhD by publication from the University of Sheffield. I confirm that you have my permission to include in this PhD our co-authored papers detailed below (pre-publication final copies):

Rishbeth, C. and Finney, N. (2006) Novelty and Nostalgia in urban greenspace – refugee perspectives. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*. 7:1, pp27-46.

Finney, N. and Rishbeth, C. (2006) Engaging with Marginalized Groups in Public Open Space Research: The Potential of Collaboration and Combined Methods. *Planning Theory and Practice*, 97:3, pp.281-295.

Best wishes,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Nissa Finney".

Dr Nissa Finney
Lecturer, School of Social Sciences, University of Manchester

Dr Mark Powell

Tuesday 30 June 2015

Clare Rishbeth is currently undertaking a PhD by publication. I have two joint publications with Clare, as listed below. I give Clare my full permission to include these co-written papers as part of her thesis submission. Please contact me if any further clarification is required.

Powell, M and Rishbeth, C. (2012) Walking Voices: flexibility in place and meanings of place by first generation migrants, Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie, 103:1, pp.69-84.

Rishbeth, C. and Powell, M. (2013) Place Attachment and Memory: Landscapes of Belonging as Experienced Post-migration, Landscape Research, 38:2, pp160-178.

Mark Powell

Mark Powell

Date 30 June 2015.